



RECOLLECTIONS

or

EL DE GONNEVILLE.

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VOL. I.



RECOLLECTIONS  
OF  
COLONEL DE GONNEVILLE,

PUBLISHED BY HIS DAUGHTER  
THE COUNTESS DE MIRABEAU,

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY SKETCH  
BY GENERAL BARON AMBERT.

EDITED, FROM THE FRENCH,  
BY  
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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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# SKETCH OF A SOLDIER:

COLONEL DE GONNEVILLE.

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“More honour than honours.”

OLD MOTTO.

“THERE were more trees of our ancient forest overthrown than uprooted by the storms of the Revolution,” was a true and philosophical thought of M. Bonald, guided by the light of a deep and lively faith.

The longer the succession of revolutions in our unhappy country, the clearer has it become to attentive minds that the

storm that laid low the trees of the forest could not pluck up their roots.

Doubtless our country has been deeply convulsed, and the surface is strewn with ruins. The leaves have been torn down by the storm, but the roots remain alive and their sap is not dried up. They are almost universal though nearly invisible, and remain in those fields of our ancient France which bear the footprints of our ancestors. The roots of the old tree are still there, and these roots want only morning dew, fine sunny days and tranquil evenings to make them sprout afresh, expand, and grow so as to give a protecting shade to the men who may dwell beneath their shelter.

God alone can give us these things, when He deems that our trial has been long and painful enough.

These somewhat melancholy reflections have been suggested by a perusal of the

writings of a noble who was a gallant soldier and a good man.

He too belonged to the ancient forest. Like so many others he was flung to the ground, but raised himself again by a mighty effort, and experienced the troubled life of our modern generations.

Much has been made of a saying of later days, which is in fact nothing but a cast-off rag of the Revolution, namely, the appearance of new orders of society. Have those who thus threaten the French community ever cast a look on the ancient orders of society? Have they ever studied the birth and growth of the French nation beneath the shade of the cross of the priesthood, and of the sword of the nobility? Have they measured the vast work of the religious orders in preserving art and science as a holy trust, in opening public schools, in tending the sick, in preaching morality, and struggling against

barbarism? Have they reckoned up the blood shed by the nobility from Tolbiac down to Fontenoy, in order to create the fair realm of France, and to preserve our country from the assaults of the enemy?

The miserable ignorance alone of modern days could so much misconstrue the past as to believe that such as Suger, Sully, Colbert, Turenne, and Condé could have at once arisen from the common herd and envious multitude.

Nothing here on earth arises spontaneously. The cedar has been a sapling, and the river that encircles the boundaries of empires has flowed in silence, almost hidden in the grass of the meadow. Man cannot emancipate himself from this divine law governing the world, and directing all progress with far-seeing wisdom.

The subject of our Memoir, as we have said, belonged to the ancient strata of

society. The moment these strata were broken up he hesitated not, but gallantly took his post among the ranks of the defenders of his country. He followed the tradition of his race, and was a soldier.

This was the time when Châteaubriand said, "The honour of France took refuge beneath her flag." Men took refuge in the camp to escape from politics. Camps were a neutral ground where the sons of France all lived like brave comrades, whether they came from cottage or from castle. A moment before, by a freak of fortune, the generals had laid their heads upon the block. But they were familiar with death, and received it from the revolutionary tribunal as easily as on the field of battle. Not one of them thought of sacrificing military duty to his private ambition, or deserted the camp for the public platform—military honour remained unstained notwithstanding the Revolution.

Hocbe. Kleber. Desaix. Marceau. had all fallen in arms in the midst of their soldiers. Not a single one, whatever were his origin or his faith, had failed in fidelity to the chivalrous notions of the old captains of the ancient monarchy. They had received that mysterious inheritance, and handed it down intact to their successors. It was reserved for our time to see the sword of the general officer pass into the unwashed hands of an insurgent populace. For a captain to solicit the votes of the implacable adversaries of the army is just the same thing as surrendering his sword to the enemy.

It was not thus when M. de Gonneville took his place in the army. He had to endure sufferings, but to brook no disgrace.

At that time many scions of the old aristocracy were entering the service as private soldiers. The list of their names would be long and glorious. . It can easily

be found by taking the names of the volunteers of the last war; thus the fathers may be known by their sons.

M. de Gonneville's military recollections are not written with any artistic or scientific view. He confines himself to a simple narrative of the events of his military life, and passes by everything that has no connection with the service.

These recollections are very instructive, they penetrate into the inmost part of military life, and treat alike of the smallest details and of important matters. This book is really a page of history, an important page, letting in light on facts unknown in scientific works. We shall endeavour to 'bring some forward, but we must somewhat explain our modest share in these labours.

We had the honour to be well acquainted with him whom we are speaking of. With his manuscripts to aid the heart's memory



it will be easy to shed a light upon this noble figure. His mental and corporeal features were both deeply marked. The iron of his nature was so moulded by the Divine hand that tender lights were thrown into relief by the cold, dignified shadows, and the spectator was struck with the harmonious blending of paternal kindness and of the stern resolution which was the measure of his force of character. La Bruyère has said that there are two sorts of greatness, true and false. True greatness is free, gentle, familiar and popular ; it is easily accessible, and accepts sympathy, losing nothing by being seen close at hand. Nay, the better it is known, the more it is admired. It bends kindly towards its inferiors, and returns without effort to its natural position ; sometimes it relaxes, neglects itself, withdraws from its advantages, always sure of being able to resume them and make full use of

them; it laughs, plays, and jokes, but in a dignified manner; it is approached with a union of freedom and restraint; its noble and gentle temper inspires respect and confidence.

Such was the greatness of M. de Gonneville, and he knew how to keep himself great without making others feel themselves small. His recollections extend only to his entrance into the Army, and he is silent about his twenty earlier years. But they should not be forgotten, and it is our duty to recall them.

The house of Le Harivel de Gonneville was of Danish origin, and belongs to the oldest nobility of Normandy. The surname is Le Harivel and is written Harwel. A warrior of this ancient race accompanied William the Conqueror to England, and became chief of the ducal house of Northumberland, even now bearing the same arms as the Harivel de Gonnevilles.

The father of Colonel de Gonneville was the King's Lieutenant at Caen, and was entangled in one of the most bloody episodes of the Revolution. The young and brilliant Count de Belzunce was his friend. This name, illustrious for piety, devotion, and charity, could not save the Count from the blind fury of the populace.

Pursued by a maddened crowd, Belzunce fled for refuge to the Governor. At the risk of sharing his death, M. de Gonneville received him in his house, and it was very soon besieged, and taken by assault. Belzunce was torn from his asylum, though he made a desperate resistance, was dragged through the streets, and massacred on the Place Saint Pierre.

Aymar Oliver Le Harivel de Gonneville, who was born in 1763, was then six years old, and it was by the merest chance that his father and he himself were not involved in the fate of the Count de

Belzunce. Eighty years after this scene of blood, Colonel de Gonneville would shudder with indignation as he described it. He could remember the smallest details of that dreadful night, when his mother carried off her youngest son through the crowd which was yelling for more blood.

While this trembling mother was making her escape with her two children, the populace were tearing the body of the Count de Belzunce to pieces. A woman tore out his heart, held it up to the crowd on the point of a knife, put it on a grate full of charcoal, and devoured it at last with the rage of a tigress.

The only means of escape of Madame de Gonneville and her children was through the air-hole of a cellar. They were sheltered by the darkness of the night, and their progress was undisturbed, save by the cries threatening the Governor's

life. Aymar de Gonneville hurried after his mother, holding on to her dress.

Some time afterwards, in spite of the penalties that were constantly re-enacted, the former Governor of Caen emigrated and became a lieutenant-colonel in the Army of Condé. His property was sold, and his wife obliged to take refuge in the hut of a fisherman near Rouen on the banks of the Seine.

This high born lady bred up in riches and honours, now lived in obscurity and poverty, and we must add in sanctity.

The subject of our narrative was now nine years old. He went to Rouen every day in a little boat to fetch necessaries for his mother and brother. As this fisherman's hut was unlikely to attract observation, the chiefs of the Royalist Army of Normandy sometimes came at night to consult under this almost invisible roof.

General Bruslart often wanted messengers to communicate with General de Frotté, but it soon became impossible to obtain any, as several had been taken and put to death.

Madame de Gonneville had taught her children to keep a secret. They were no restraints on the conversation, and their looks showed that they understood it all.

Aymar de Gonneville was eleven years old when, one evening, just on retiring to rest, General Bruslart expressed his regret at being unable to forward some important despatches to the department of L'Orne. The boy offered to carry them. Bruslart cast a long loving look on him and refused.

Then the mother took her son by the hand, led him to the Royalist chief, and said these simple words in an agitated voice. "Take him. I give him to you for

the King's service." They disguised him at once, and hid the despatches under his peasant's garb ; opened the door, his mother pressed him to her heart with blessings, and with a confident step he went out into the darkness.

This first journey occupied a fortnight ; the child made the whole of it on foot, and brought back General de Frotté's answer.

For a period of two years he was thus employed on some important missions, going from Rouen to Caen, and from Caen to Alençon, never coming back unless his dangerous work was done. He often spent the night in woods or fields, sleeping beneath the shelter of a tree or hedge. Young as he was, attention had been directed to him and suspicion excited. This made him careful, and he never allowed himself to fall asleep without having hidden his despatches under

stones. He would much sooner have given up his life than surrendered them.

Thus he grew up among perils. Poverty, pain, weariness, and danger were all his mind had to feed on. He saw the heads of his mother's friends fall, he saw her tremble and pray for him. He supported and encouraged her when she mourned her absent husband, of whom she heard nothing for many years. Before he was grown up, he was a soldier and head of his family.

At last the Reign of Terror terminated, and M. de Gonneville returned to France about 1801.

We shall find the subject of our portrait a private in a cavalry regiment in 1804, and follow him over the battle-fields without fear of being misled. But as he passes over in silence anything that has not an intimate connection with his mili-



tary life, we will mention a few circumstances of his private life.

When captain of cuirassiers, on leave in 1810, he married his cousin Mademoiselle de Langle, by whom he had two children. In a period of six years he only spent a few months in Normandy with his wife, and she died in 1816. He lost his son in 1819, his father in 1821, his daughter in 1822, and his mother in 1823.

In 1825 he obtained the hand of the sister of M. de Bacourt, who had acted as ambassador in the time of Louis Philippe, and was the friend and testamentary executor of Prince Talleyrand.

Of this marriage was born after several years, a daughter, who became Countess de Mirabeau.

Before opening M. de Gonnevillè's manuscript, and making ourselves acquainted with the fortunes of the young

soldier, let us pause to take a look at the old man of ninety. He died at Nancy, so that the veteran could hear the march of the enemy from the very first days of the war. God alone knows what echoes rang through his soul.

But when peace was signed, a large quantity of manuscript one day reached us written in a firm hand. The old man spent his last hours on his profession, and had written some interesting notes on the war for us ; one especially, concerning the army at Metz, bore the mark of incontestable superiority. The old warrior spoke of our unhappy France with pious resignation. He mourned her errors, and concluding with Shakespeare's words, "France is God's soldier," he added, "God will not forsake His soldier."

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The best side of the Colonel's character came into play at the domestic hearth ; in

his latter years he took up his quarters there between the wife who had been for nearly fifty years the inseparable companion of his life, his daughter, and grandchildren. We have told what Christian feelings pervaded him, we have spoken of his courage, and endeavoured to describe his kindness.

Yet the portrait is not complete. In physiognomy there are slight tints which the eye guesses at, though nearly invisible, and which no words can express. The expression of the countenance is the reflection of the light from a hidden fire.

This man never led a useless life; from infancy he had been the support of his mother, and the devoted agent of the party to which he belonged by right of birth. Thirty years of his long career were entirely devoted to his country, and he was still in his full strength when he retired into the province of Normandy,

that he loved so well. His lofty intellect was then, as always, employed in doing good. The Colonel lived with his brother, a few leagues from Caen, on an hereditary property ; and he soon became the providence of the whole country, where his name will never be forgotten.

How can all his tenderness be told in words ?—visits to the sick whom he nursed himself, consolation to the afflicted, paternal advice to those astray, alms to the miserable, charity to all ?

But he was not entirely absorbed in this Christian life. The most charming hospitality and frank cheerfulness reigned under his roof. He and his brother were the only teachers of the Comtesse de Mirabeau, his daughter ; the soldier thinking himself ignorant and unlettered, again, in a lonely neighbourhood, commenced his studies in order to direct the education of an only daughter, from whom he was

unwilling to be separated. Along with a classical education there was moral teaching, and that direction of energy which he considered necessary above all. Lessons in drill, lessons in riding, exercises of all kinds, everything had its time, and the Colonel used to laugh and say that the morning was devoted to classes on horseback.

He remembered 1793, and perhaps foresaw 1875. At the end of the year 1872 he perceived the approach of death, and did not turn aside his head. By that time the soldier had yielded to the Christian.

The malady that carried him off made its appearance on the very day of the Germans' entry into Nancy. His conflicting emotions were the more severe because the old captain had some intimate friendships among the ranks of the foreigners. He did not feel the blind sentiment of mere hatred of the

conqueror. He knew what war is, and remembered his victories and his captivity. He had not forgotten the cruel mission of the soldier, and coolly and wisely weighed the dreadful duty of the man who bears the sword for his country's honour.

However noble were his feelings, none the less did he feel a mortal grief at the sight of conquered France. The foreigners themselves understood this grief, and the Prince Royal of Prussia paid him the honour of a visit, and reminded him that in 1808 *the French were the conquerors of Germany.*

The old soldier, a descendant of the illustrious captains of Louis XIV, a perfect gentleman, a veteran of the first empire, an heir of all our previous glories, who had always borne his head high, would not bend it either to the victorious enemy or to the Revolution.

God had reserved this last trial for him,

and it brought him to death. When he saw his end approaching, and the priest had given the heavenly blessing, the old man in his turn gave his blessing to his family and servants, like a knight of ancient times. "Above!" said he, "I shall make my prayer that God may permit my soul to hover around you."

Then after a long silence his voice was heard again. He spoke of war, invasion, country. His last thoughts were for France and for God.

Such had been the death, three centuries and a half before, of Bayard, the knight without fear and without reproach.

But one last joy had been reserved for the old man. On the very day that the news of our first defeat arrived at Nancy, the only man of his family, Count Roger de Martel, the young husband of the beloved granddaughter of the Colonel, came to announce to him that he was going to enter the army.

The Colonel's countenance lighted up, his heart leapt in his bosom, while former days were recalled.

He whose portrait we are drawing had reached the age of seventy-five years, when we had the honour of knowing him. His mighty old age resembled those majestic rivers that seem to enlarge just before they fall into the ocean, and whose water is as clear and limpid as when it springs from its source.

One fine Autumn evening we were conversing with him under the trees of the favourite walk of King Stanislas, Duke of Lorraine.

Our minds were roaming at hap-hazard, passing from history to philosophy, from philosophy to art, from art to the curiosities of human life. I asked him what Fortune, the heathen goddess invoked by Christians, really was. He looked at me as if to divine my under-current of thought.



I said, "I am surprised that you did not attain to the height of it. Is Fortune really blind then?"

An imperceptible smile passed over his lips, but he spoke not.

I resumed, "I must remind you, my venerable master, of a story of the fifteenth century; a knight, whose name I have forgotten, had distinguished himself at the battle of Fornova, under Charles VIII. Louis XII. sent him into Italy, and his blood flowed on the bridge of the Garigliano. The knight was again wounded at Agnadel, and covered himself with glory at Brescia in sight of Bayard. He returned to Italy in the time of Francis I., and fought with Prospero Colonna. At Marignano the knight protected his king, fell into the hands of the enemy and was led into captivity. Afterwards he returned home, with his body seamed with scars, and brought

nothing with him but a broken lance and a helmet dented with blows. The knight raised not a single complaint, but beneath his shield these words were traced by his comrades in arms, 'More honour than honours.' Has not the ancient gentleman of Marignano bequeathed to you his example and his motto? But how can four words recompense a long life of a good man?"

At that moment one last ray of the sun lighted up the Colonel's countenance, a glory seemed to illuminate his white head, and his eyes shone bright. Then he stretched himself to his full height, raised his right hand and pointed to the sky.

GENERAL BARON AMBERT.



RECOLLECTIONS

OF

COLONEL DE GONNEVILLE.



## CHAPTER I.

ENTRANCE INTO THE SERVICE—THE 20TH REGIMENT OF CHASSEURS—COLONEL DE MARIGNY—LODI—THE 6TH REGT. OF CUIRASSIERS—COLONEL D'AVENAY—THE BRIDGE OF VERONA AND THE VOLTIGEURS—THE BATTLE OF CALDIERO AND THE ARCHDUKES—MARSHAL MASSENA—THE PASSAGE OF THE TAGLIAMENTO—RETREAT OF THE AUSTRIANS—THE PRINCE DE ROHAN—MARCH UPON HUNGARY—TREATY OF PRESBURG—RETURN TO ITALY—THE INN-KEEPER OF PONTANA FREDA—EUGENE BEAUHARNAIS AND THE BAVARIAN PRINCESS—A SOLDIER.

I AM going to collect in their order, as well as I can, the remembrances of a long military career spent at a memorable time. This last fact alone can give interest to what is to come; and if I allow myself to add a few words on my personal impressions, they may be set down either to that slight satisfaction that is very commonly felt in speaking of oneself, or to

the desire of being of use to those who, when I am gone, may find something to learn from these remembrances. I am now seventy years old, and must recall things which happened when I was twenty. It is not very easy, and no doubt there will be numerous omissions in my stories : but I am quite certain that they will be true and never exaggerated in their truth.

I believe my taste for soldiering arose from the reading of the "Jerusalem Delivered," and thus dates from my childhood ; for this book, which I have read twenty times, and hope to read again, was in my hands before I had reached my twelfth year. It made so deep and definite an impression on me, as to withdraw me, as it were, for a time from actual life.

I made myself one with the heroes whose prowess it relates, and my enthusiasm was most excited by Tancred and the old Raymond Count of Toulouse. I was so overcome while reading the passage where he replies to the challenge of Argantes, when all the knights around Godfrey were silent, that I burst into tears, and would gladly have given my life to have found myself also in the presence of Argantes. From this it is easy

to fancy that everything relating to the art of war found favour with me; but I groaned for a long time over the invention of powder, and regretted the shield and the lance.

At last I entered the service in 1804, I was nearly twenty-one and was of the class that the law of conscription called upon in that year. I anticipated the summons, and entered as a private in the 20th regiment of Mounted Chasseurs, where two of my friends, Vaumel de Livet and Le Termelier, had preceded me, and were already sergeants. I had obtained my parents' consent—but a consent so mingled with evidence of regret, and of fear of what I might become, that to prevent my resolution from wavering I required the support of all that could revive my ideas of glory, and also of the disgust that arose in me at the idle, useless life I was leading with the youth of Caen, a fairly brilliant youth at that time, but restless, quarrelsome, and dreaded by families for fifty leagues around. There was another feeling that I had to struggle with. My father and all my uncles, both on father's and mother's side, had emigrated and lost a greater or smaller portion of their



property, as well as all their expectations, so the idea of seeing me in the service of the Republic and wearing the tricoloured cockade, was painful to them, especially to my uncles, in whom old-fashioned notions had struck much deeper root than in my father, who was infinitely superior to them altogether, and who, though full of the deepest devotion to the house of Bourbon, could not, at this time of the dawning of the Empire, see, like his brothers, any indication of a speedy and certain restoration in the most unfavourable conditions of political affairs.

So I left Caen at the end of September, 1804, to join the 20th Chasseurs, whose head-quarters were at Saint Briec. I was furnished with a letter of introduction from our prefect of Calvados, M. Caffarelli, to his brother the Bishop of Saint Briec, and another letter from M. de Montcanisy, a former lieutenant-colonel of the Queen's Dragoons, to a major of the 20th Chasseurs, called Rosières. Lastly our cousin, Le Clerc d'Osmonville, had written to Colonel Coutard commanding a regiment of infantry, also having its head-quarters at Saint Briec, to beg him to give me a recommendation to his comrade

M. de Marigny, colonel of the 20th Chasseurs. This M. de Marigny came from Dauphiné; he was rather over thirty years old, of handsome person, had not a penny of private fortune, and spent a thousand a year; so his poor regiment was his farm, and he squeezed it in every possible way, without any regard for justice. Afterwards an inquiry took place, orders were given for his arrest and trial, but he made his escape, and no news was ever heard of him till the very day of the battle of Jena, when he rejoined his regiment with a perfectly regular order to resume the command. A few minutes afterwards a shot carried off his head.

When I arrived at Saint Briec not one of my expected protectors was there. All the regimental staff was gone to Paris as a deputation to be present at the coronation, and the regiment was dispersed over the country from Lannion to Saint Malo, under the command of Major Castex, and he was at Rennes with the depot. Nothing but the *compagnie d'élite*, commanded by Captain Fleury, was at Saint Briec; the lieutenant's name was Capitan, and one of the sub-lieutenants, Marigny, was the colonel's brother. The first person

I met was the chief sergcant Guilmin ; I gave him my marching order. and he took me to a somewhat poor-looking inn, where he presented me to Captain Fleury, who was there with other officers. The captain spoke to me in a haughty and ironical manner. and gave orders that I should be provisionally entered on the register of the *compagnie d'élite*. I was taken to the quarters in an old Capuchin convent, and placed under the hands of Corporal Henneson, a sort of Hercules, nearly six feet high, whose bed I was to share.

The same day I was so fortunate as to meet Galbois, aide-de-camp of General Vaufreland. who had been commander of the department of Calvados, and was now of the Côtes du Nord. I knew the General, and had been intimate with Galbois. Both of them greeted me in a very friendly manner. and this gave me a little importance in the eyes of my chiefs. I also remember with gratitude that when I was on duty as the General's orderly, Madame de Vaufreland sent me an arm-chair and some books.

I should like to observe here how much the position of any persons who are in authority over

us is enhanced in our imagination by this very dependence. Before I became a soldier, a captain seemed to me to be but a very ordinary sort of gentleman, and as soon as I joined the regiment he appeared to me perched on a pinnacle that I never could reach, there were so many steps between.

I was the last of a troop of a hundred-and-twenty men, most of whom had seen active service; many of them had weapons 'presented for good service. There was one named Robin, who had a silver-mounted carbine with a fantastic inscription, declaring that he, single handed, had rescued four hundred prisoners, escorted by two hundred Austrians. This Robin was a regular brigand, and looked like one; he had committed pillage, rape, murder, and this to the knowledge of the whole regiment. The rest of the company was pretty well supplied with men of this stamp, and the horrible stories they told of an evening in the rooms, made one's hair stand on end. But among all these were also to be found admirable instances of their bravery, which they boasted of much less than of their misdeeds. I had become their comrade, even their inferior, as I

had never seen fire; and when I found myself with them on my first evening in a great room, formerly a corridor of the convent, with thirty beds in a row, half of one of which was mine, with a solitary candle stuck in a potato by way of candlestick, shedding only a melancholy light—my family, my father's house, the care and sweet remembrance of my youth rose up to make a cruel contrast with the surroundings that must encircle me daily for an unlimited period. I managed to conquer this attack of discouragement and disgust, as well as similar failings roused by other matters.

Henneson, my bed-fellow, was an excellent man, very well mannered for a peasant. I lost sight of him for twenty-four years, and found him at Verdun a retired captain; I was then lieutenant-colonel of the 12th Regiment of Chasseurs, and was really glad to see him again. He was married and had resumed his agricultural life, living in the country a few leagues from Verdun.

As soon as I joined my regiment, I threw myself ardently into all the exercises required to place me on a level with my comrades.

I studied the theory as well, and as I could already ride pretty well I was soon able to take my place in the ranks.

We were then in training for a descent on England. In order to make provision in case of any emergency, artillery instructors had been sent to us, and once a week we had gun and mortar drill. At the end of six months I was made a corporal, without having to leave the *compagnie d'élite*. This was a great favour; for the interests of discipline usually require that a man when invested with this rank—so little above the soldier—should not be left among the persons who were his equals the day before. I saw the wisdom of this rule as soon as I assumed my new duties, but I was not wanting in a somewhat serious matter that then arose, and as there was no fixed order of promotion at that time, I was appointed sergeant a month later, and still in the same troop.

Just as I was given this step, one of my relations, M. d'Avenay, Colonel of the 6th Regiment of Cuirassiers, knowing that I was already a sub-officer, made a direct request to the Emperor Napoleon, at a review held in Italy,

at Monteschiare. that I should be made a sub-lieutenant. An instance that destiny often hangs on a trifle, for if my appointment to the rank of sergeant had taken place a fortnight later the opportunity would have been lost, and heaven knows what would have become of me.

A few months afterwards, I received my commission, with an order to join the 6th Cuirassiers, quartered at Lodi. I received it at my father's house, where I happened to be, as I was one of a detachment of the 20th Chasseurs that had been sent to Caen for a remount. I started for Italy at the end of August, 1805, and soon reached Lodi.

War with Austria was imminent, the armies faced each other: those of Italy fronted on the banks of the Adige. We held Verona, and the Austrians Veronette. The bridges between them had been cut, and the passage was commanded by batteries and loopholed houses on both sides.

On arriving at Lodi I only found the depot of my regiment, under the orders of a captain, as the major was away on some mission or other. Being a relative of the Colonel. and probably by his recommendation, I was excellently received

by the officers of the depot, who were most of them too old or infirm for active service. I was ~~was~~ soon fitted out, and received orders to join the squadrons on active service. I left Lodi, for the first time in my life in command of a detachment. It was composed of thirty cuirassiers and some sub-officers, who had been left at the depot for various reasons, and were now to join their squadrons. I was very new to my duties, but very desirous to be equal to them, and much interested in my journey. I passed Pizzighetone, Cremona, Mantua, and joined the service squadrons at Isola della Scala, a town four leagues below Verona, in the midst of rice grounds, and therefore very unhealthy.

Colonel d'Avenay received me in a way that showed he had pleasure in seeing me, and on my side I felt a great deal at finding myself with him, though we had never been very intimate, as he was fifteen years older than myself. But I had often seen him in Normandy; he came to visit my father at Caen, and also in the country where we were neighbours. He was the eldest son of M. Rioult de Villaunay, and his name of d'Avenay came from a property on which his father



lived, and that was meant to be his. He had one sister, Madame de Magneville, and one brother, Adrian de Villaunay; we were related through their mother, who was my father's great aunt.

The family had a considerable amount of property that had increased day by day by the economies of its head, in excess of any ordinary moderation. Colonel d'Avenay was a splendid man in every sense of the word; his features were perfectly regular, and had a martial and imposing expression. In society he was not considered clever, because he often made far-fetched jokes, that sometimes were very heavy. His education had been so neglected that he knew neither French nor spelling, but his speech was ready and clear. He was possessed of an unwearied activity, which could not be daunted by any obstacle, and a determination that caused him to be ready for any responsibility; he inspired unlimited confidence in all those who served under his orders, and was extremely far-seeing in everything.\* His men worshipped him. Had he lived, he would certainly have become a marshal of France; for in addition to the qualities I have mentioned, he had the art of putting anything he did in high

relief, and he was always inspired by a spirit of justice and quiet courage.

Our division was composed of the 4th, 6th, 7th, and 8th Cuirassiers; it was commanded by General de Pully, an officer of very ordinary ability, and a more than equivocal reputation on the score of morality. He was a regular old gossip in the ordinary ways of life, and used to make speeches to the soldiers, while they laughed at him.

We and the 4th Cuirassiers made up the first brigade, and as there was no General of Brigade, Colonel d'Avenay commanded it as senior officer. This seniority arose from his rank of Colonel of the Royal Normans in former times, which he had lost at the period when the nobles were excluded from the army by a decree. When he again reached the same rank, the eleven years that he had spent in retirement were reckoned as half-pay time.

The 6th Cuirassiers had been on the point of being disbanded and distributed among other regiments, on account of the evil influence diffused through every branch of its service by

Colonel Cacotte, the predecessor of Colonel d'Avenay.

Before the formation of the twelve regiments of Cuirassiers which, with two of Carabineers then composed the heavy cavalry, there had been twenty-four regiments called heavy cavalry. The consequence was that two of these regiments had been united for the formation of each regiment of Cuirassiers, and that only eighteen months before. Now Colonel Cacotte, a blundering and partial man, had permitted such an ill-feeling to get a hold in his regiment, that the officers of the old King's Regiment and the old 23rd Cavalry which composed it, lived in enmity, and were always fighting; the sub-officers and soldiers did the same, and in consequence there was no discipline, no drill, no smartness.

As soon as Colonel d'Avenay arrived, he changed all this with a wave of his wand; he called the officers together and spoke firmly to them, while giving them his promise to have their interest at heart when they deserved it. He caused the retirement of some poor old creatures, procured a promise that vacancies should be filled up from the corps, an extraordinary subsidy

for putting clothing, accoutrements, and saddlery in proper condition, and for several horses to be cast and replaced. All this time drill went on energetically. The old soldiers, who formed the majority, soon recovered themselves, and at the end of four months, at a grand review of the whole army, held by the Emperor in the plain of Monteschiare, the regiment showed off to such excellent effect that its chief got anything he asked for, and the result to me was the favour of being appointed a sub-lieutenant, an especial favour to one so lately made a sub-officer, and who ought not to have been promoted before others who had claims for promotion from serving in several campaigns.

When I joined the 6th Cuirassiers, the body of sub-officers was much superior to that of officers. The latter, although very brave men, were without education, and had not the least idea of manners or conventionalities. With the exception of La Nongarède, De Tilly, and myself, all the officers were no longer young men.

My life at Isola-della-Scala became entirely military, and I set myself to learn all the duties of my position that I did not know. The list was

a long one, for the 20th Chasseurs had been dispersed over the country in Brittany, and never drilled together: and as long as I was with them my instruction had been confined to a very superficial knowledge of the soldiers' duty, and the services that the sub-officers have to perform in garrison. So I set to work to study the theory and the duties of troops on campaigning service, and I soon found myself a match for my comrades on these points.

The army under the command of Marshal Masséna was waiting, before crossing the Adige, for information from the great army operating in Germany. The plan of the Marshal was to force the passage at Verona, to march on Caldiero, a well-known position two leagues from Verona, on the road to Vicenza, which it seemed certain that the Austrians would hold, as they had always done in the preceding wars; this time they had improved the natural means of defence, by numerous field-works armed with a large force of artillery. During the struggle that would take place in the open country, the infantry division, Verdier, ten thousand men strong, was to pass the Adige three leagues below

Verona, and so to turn the left flank of the Austrians and come on their rear. Our division was to follow this movement, but for that purpose we ought to have had a bridge prepared to carry us over at the appointed place, but General Verdier could not establish it.

The attack on the bridge of Verona took place on the 28th of October, 1805, and was successful. While on this topic, I ought to mention a specimen of the daring of our light infantry. The bridges of Verona are of ancient construction, and very highly arched, and, in consequence, the Austrian batteries had full command of the highest part, where the bridge was cut about six feet in width, but a few paces lower down on our side was exposed only to the fire of the loopholed houses. Attempts had been made at night to place planks on the breach, but this work could not be done without noise, and then the guns, which were laid for night as well as for day, fired grape, and killed and wounded great numbers. The Voltigeurs in a body earnestly begged to be allowed to carry the position in their own fashion, and at the turn of the day the enemy might see our Voltigeurs falling one after another with extraordinary

speed on to the side of the bridge he was holding ; they ran at full speed, jumped the breach, and with the same rush carried the guns and seized the houses. This bridge is some thirty feet above the river, which is very deep, and runs like a mill-stream : two men only failed in the leap, and fell into the gulf. A few minutes after this exploit, the planks were fixed, and the Voltigeurs properly supported.

On the evening of that day I had been sent by General de Pully to General Verdier for information as to what progress had been made in the construction of the bridge. There was a good deal of firing from both banks, but without any great injury being done to either side, for the combatants were covered by the embankments, and they are very high at that spot.

The battle of Caldiero took place on the 30th, and was most sanguinary ; the whole day was consumed in taking and retaking the various positions of chief importance. The Austrian army was commanded by the Archduke Charles, having with him the Archdukes Louis, John, and Maximilian. The Princes went wherever their presence could encourage the defence, and charged

on foot, at the head of the battalions, to the recapture of elevated positions.

We beheld this battle like a play from the best seats. The left bank of the Adige at Verona is a buttress of the Alps; it rises rapidly like an amphitheatre, with successive ledges perpendicular to the river, coming quite down to the marshes that fringe it. Caldiero is situated on the last of these ledges towards Vicenza, and to reach it the natural and artificial defences with which the country bristled had to be carried. As we had missed the part intended for us, from the impossibility of establishing a bridge to carry us over, we remained on the right bank, following all the events of this action with the naked eye. It was very murderous, and lasted the whole day. Some of the positions were carried, but the strongest, of which Caldiero formed the centre, remained in the hands of the Austrians, and we had on that day a loss of six thousand men killed and wounded. Marshal Masséna has been accused of having given battle on this occasion entirely for the sake of his private interest; he had just received information of the success of the grand army, the capitulation of Ulm,



and the army of Italy had not yet done anything.

The sight of the battle, the sound of the guns and musketry fire, excited and impressed me very much. I had already heard the whistle of balls when I was sent to General Verdier, but without running much risk, and I suffered much all day at the passive duty to which we found ourselves condemned, so different from what I felt myself called by inclination to fulfil. My fancy created pictures; I exaggerated the intoxicating delight of success, which nothing in my imagination could obscure. Then I never conceived that devotion and heroism could pass unobserved; in my eyes all the chiefs were impartial men, always anxious to reward good actions duly. I could not understand envy among comrades, and I burnt to distinguish myself, with the belief that I should find sympathy everywhere.

On the evening after the battle, we passed the Adige above the line occupied by our troops, and we established our bivouac behind it, on the left of the road to Vicenza. All night we were on the alert, and the patrols continually exchanged shots. The next morning was occupied

in feeling the enemy. We advanced a little, and I found myself for the first time on a field of battle. It was literally covered with the dead ; which in spite of the shrinking of our horses, they were obliged to tread under foot. We halted every moment, and in a hollow road where we stopped, besides the corpses beneath my horse's feet there were others on the hedges on each side, so close to me that I could have touched them. They were perfectly naked, and their hideous wounds visible ; those at the bottom of the road had been mutilated and crushed by the wheels of the artillery. Their hair generally stood on end, and their faces were dreadful. I confess that this sight very much cooled my martial ardour, and my hair made some small imitation of that above-mentioned. I thought of my father, my mother, my brother, all so dear to me, whom I had left in Normandy, and sorrowfully considered that perhaps in a few hours I, too, should be dead, naked, and crushed by the artillery, and this was entirely beside the notions I had given myself of the honours paid to the brave who had fallen on the field of battle.

During the day the enemy gave up the rest of the positions he had retained, and commenced a

full retreat. This confirmed the reports about Marshal Massena. This retreat was, indeed, the natural consequence of the march of the grand army upon Vienna, and the blood shed at Caldiero had been entirely and wholly wasted. The enemy's army was thirty thousand men stronger than ours, and conducted its retreat in capital order and without any notable loss. Northern Italy is an everlasting defile for an army, cleft by rivers, and near them alone is there any space for deployment. Thus in the Venetian territory, from the Adige to Isonzo, the fields of battle are between Caldiero and Vicenza, on the banks of the Brenta, of the Piave, of the Tagliamento, and in the plains of Udine, in the midst of which is Campo Formio.

We followed the Austrians in their retreat, which they conducted deliberately, stopping at the passages of rivers long enough to allow their artillery and baggage to pass. The rivers had no bridges, for they inundate a considerable amount of country during the melting of the snows. We crossed the Brenta by a ford, and the Piave by a bridge of boats. These two passages were hardly disputed, and we made

no figure in them ; but that of the Tagliamento gave rise to a tolerably serious affair when all the cavalry was placed in line ; there was a smart caunonade, and we were manœuvring near enough to the enemy to give us hopes that we were at last coming to blows. I was ashamed of the sensations that I had experienced at the sight of the field of battle of Caldiero, and feeling the need of restoring my position in my own eyes, I prayed for an opportunity with all my heart.

I was on the main guard the night before the day of Tagliamento. During the march that we made to reach the spot, I was on the rear guard of my regiment, and as it was cold we were wrapped in our cloaks. When we reached the Tagliamento, I saw the 4th and 6th Cuirassiers forming line of battle at the gallop and drawing swords. I conformed to this movement ; but what was my consternation when, desiring to make my detachment draw swords, I found I had not got my own. While trotting during the night, the upper clasp had given way, the sword had turned over and fallen from the scabbard, giving no notice of the misfortune which seemed so dreadful to me, that I remember the feeling I experienced as

if it had taken place yesterday. Happily I saw our surgeon-major, who had no need for his sword; I hastened to him, and begged it of him in a way to make him feel that he could not refuse. Thus I found myself armed again; but the incident served to make me take especial care of everything relating to the arms and equipment of a cavalry officer on service, and I may say that from that time forward I never experienced any misadventure of the kind again.

The Tagliamento, when at the fullest, is at least a league in width, but now it was only a plain of pebbles and sand cleft by two or three streams of water, the deepest not reaching to a foot and a-half. We made our bivouac in its bed under a dreadful wind, which enveloped us in whirlwinds of sand; we had nothing either for ourselves or for our horses, and it was a trying night. Next morning I was detached with twenty-five men to search for oats and maize.

I went back, inclining to the right, and getting as far as I could away from the direction of our advance; I was successful, and in the evening rejoined our quarters in another place, on the other

side of the Tagliamento, near Cadraipa. I was well-received, for I brought ample provision. This was the first mission entrusted to me, and I was satisfied at having performed it well.

The main body of the Austrian army retired by Carniola, and only a small portion of it by Carinthia. We followed the latter after having stayed some weeks near Cividad and Palma Nova, and then returned to Campo Formio, where we remained a fortnight, then mounting the gorge of the Tagliamento, passing Ponteba, Willach on the Drave, and Clagenfurth, and taking the road to Hungary, in order to rejoin the portion of our army that had taken the route by Carniola.

During our stay at Campo Formio the Prince de Rohan issued from the Tyrol, by the valley of the Drave, with an Austrian corps of ten or twelve thousand men. A sufficient number of troops to make head against him were thrown back, and among them our division, but still without finding any means of coming to action. Rohan's corps was too much isolated, besides being demoralised by the information received from Germany, and the retreat of Prince Charles.

It was entirely defeated, and the Prince de Rohan seriously wounded and made prisoner.

During our march in Carinthia we advanced to the frontier of Hungary, and just as we were going to cross it we received orders to return into Italy: the treaty of Presburg had just been signed.

So we retraced our steps, the Alps had to be crossed in all the severity of Winter, and our passage took place without accident, though the snow was much drifted. The plains of Italy bear an aspect far from smiling at this time of year; they are so much soaked by the rains that as far as Treviso the roads are like rivers of mud. We met nine thousand Hungarian grenadiers, who composed the garrison of Venice. It was in the middle of a narrow road, where to make room for us they were obliged to march in open ranks at each side; our horses covered them with mud, our men laughed at it, and the Hungarians were doubly humiliated, and abused them.

At Fontana Freda, the last stage before reaching Trevisa, I discovered the body of a man recently interred in a little wood of willows connected with the inn where I was lodged; and

when I examined the master of the inn about it, he seemed so dismayed at my discovery, that I immediately thought he had committed or permitted the crime. I told the colonel, we went together to the podesta, and next day at Treviso to a competent authority; we heard there that for some time the track of several travellers had been lost at Fontana Freda and that they had never been heard of again, and orders were given to apprehend the innkeeper; but as we went away the next day I never could hear any more of the matter.

We went into garrison at Vicenza, and whilst there the Viceroy of Italy, Eugène de Beauharnais married the Princess of Bavaria and brought her into his vice-royalty. Vicenza was the first Italian city where he stopped; I had been sent two leagues forward to meet him with twenty-five cuirassiers as an escort, and I was astonished at the beauty of his wife. Vicenza desired to distinguish itself; there was a ball, concerts, &c. The young and brilliant couple seemed pleased; everything at this time seemed to presage a happy fortune to them, but the sequel of their history is well-known.



We remained three or four months at Vicenza, and then went to join our depot at Lodi. I had a severe cold during the ten or twelve days' march we had to make, and suffered acutely from the first spring heat, which is very oppressive in this part of Italy. At last we arrived, and I had the delight, if the expression may be allowed me, of finding at Lodi a horse I had bought in Normandy before my departure, which had been brought me by a detachment of dragoons who had come from getting remounts at Caen. The horse had borne the journey perfectly well, and was in very good condition; he had been selected by M. de Montcanisy, who passed for a very good judge of horses. Besides the horse's material qualities, he was my countryman, and persons who have not left their country cannot understand what value anything that comes from the native land acquires in the eyes of those who are expatriated. At that time distances seemed much greater on account of the time that was occupied in traversing them, and when measuring in my mind the space between Normandy and Italy it seemed almost impassable; my feverish-

ness increased the dejection I experienced at such a separation, and I felt the approach of home sickness. I rebelled against my weakness; used every means to combat it, and my horse I must confess was a great assistance to me. He had been bought at the fair of Guibray, and I had travelled on him from Falaise to Maizet; he had been stroked and petted by my father, my mother and brother; he became my friend. I cared for him affectionately, and took especial pains with teaching him. My orderly was a cuirassier named Jouette, a man of forty years of age, who had passed through several campaigns, and was famous for the way he looked after horses, for he was passionately fond of them. Jouette was a living instance of a particular type and deserves to have his portrait drawn, besides I only pay a proper tribute of gratitude in making mention of him. He was the nephew of a major who had left the regiment two years before, and he had always refused the promotion he deserved for his excellent conduct. Brave, gentle, of an honesty equal to any trial, his respect for his superiors was a kind of worship; he might be said to be an ideal soldier. He had a house and a small

property in the Aube bringing in twenty-four pounds a year, and left the whole enjoyment of it in the hands of his sister, the widow of a man who had dissipated her property. He lived upon nothing but his pay, and put by anything I gave him. If an officer of the regiment of any rank at all had appeared on parade with his arms and saddlery smarter than mine, or his horse better groomed, Jouette would have been inconsolable; but he never exposed himself to this vexation, and I was literally compelled, before going on parade, to submit to his inspection. He was accustomed every day to write down all he did, and anything that he noticed; he wrote it on loose sheets that he kept in the folds of his forage-cap, and in diaries which he shut up in his portmanteau, and gave in charge to some friend at the depot when he went campaigning.

We received horses and recruits from France; I was constantly employed in their instruction, and that finished my own. At the end of a few months we received orders to go into garrison at Piacenza, when the course of training was actively continued. War with Prussia became imminent and soon broke out.

## CHAPTER II.

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MARCH ON PRUSSIA—BERLIN—PASSAGE OF THE VISTULA—THE CHATELAINES OF THORN—TWENTY-FIVE FRENCH AGAINST A HUNDRED AND FIFTY PRUSSIAN—THE DRAGOONS OF HAOES—COUNT MOLKE—WOUNDED AND PRISONERS—INCIDENTS OF CAPTIVITY AND JOURNEY FROM CULMSEE TO PILLAU—POLISH LADY—BARON DE WERTHER—THE HUSSARS OF DEATH—THE SON OF LOUIS XVI'S COACHMAKER—THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER—THE BATTLE OF EYLAU—KONISBERG AND THE RUSSIANS.

IN the month of November, 1806, the four regiments of Cuirassiers, composing our division, received orders to march on Berlin without delay. Of course the battle of Jena and several actions had preceded the occupation of this capital by our troops. We had to march with speed, and we were only allowed three halts for a considerable distance. We went

through the Tyrol, this being the third time I crossed the Alps in the course of one year, and each time I had gone by a different route. I saw Trent, Botzen, and Inspruck with the appearance of which I was greatly struck. The town is commanded at a very short distance on the Italian side by very lofty mountains, over whose heights we had been marching all the morning in a thick fog that was nothing but cloud. When we left these elevated regions we issued all at once out of this thick vapour, and saw Inspruck at our feet, but at an immeasurable depth, and the plain was lighted by a brilliant sun, yet a few minutes before we had been unable to perceive the least ray from it; on the north-east we could follow the course of the Inn winding through the mountains, for Inspruck is commanded by the Alps on all sides. We had the same day left the springs of the Eisach, an affluent of the Adige and come upon the Inn an affluent of the Danube. Possibly it is childish in me, but I have never passed Nature's tracings of grand lines of demarcation without peculiar emotion.

From Inspruck our march lay on Augsburg and Nuremberg, after passing the Danube at

Donawerth; then on Bayreuth, Gera, Leipsig, Wittenberg, Potsdam, and at length we reached Berlin. General Clarck was commanding in the city, and it was perfectly quiet.

Our division occupied the barracks of the guard and the body-guard, and we spent a week there to recover ourselves a little, for we had considerable need after marching so long without a halt, and the more that after Inspruck we had a continuance of rainy weather, and had to pass by roads that were dreadfully broken up and inundated plains; among them there were some near Augsburg more than a league in length, that we passed at night; I never understood how it was we were not all stuck there. We left Berlin about the middle of January, 1807, to join the army already beyond the Vistula; we passed the Oder at Custrin, and marched on Posen and Thorn. There are often remarkable contrasts in military life; after we left Berlin I had always been very miserably quartered, usually upon Jews or peasants, and for the very good reason that I was only a sub-lieutenant, and the four regiments of our division travelled together; the day before we reached Thorn I

was summoned on duty to the head-quarters of the regiment, and I found Colonel d'Avenay installed in a fine house occupied by seven or eight ladies, almost all young, and two of them remarkably pretty; they were elegant, and spoke French as well as we did; they received us most delightfully. In the house among all these women there was one old man more than sixty years of age, for able-bodied men were engaged in raising soldiers and drilling them to come and join us afterwards. They asked me to remain, and I was only too glad to accept; they provided a very good dinner served in French style; in the evening they gave us some music, and the time passed so pleasantly that we did not go to bed till midnight, though much tired with a long day's march. We had a thick bed of very fresh straw to lie on spread in a gallery leading to the saloon. This is always the case in best furnished houses of Poland; no one has a bed who does not bring it with him.

We departed before our fair hostesses were awake, and we reached Thorn at night, for at this time of year and in this latitude, it begins at half-past three. We passed the Vistula on a hastily

constructed bridge, the legs of the trestles were whole pine trees, and so the bridge was much elevated above the surface of the river, and loaded with enormous masses of ice that struck against the trestles, and caused a vibration of the bridge that was not reassuring, especially as it was enhanced by the irregular steps of the horses covering it from one bank to the other; besides this bridge was only twelve feet wide, and had no parapet. However, the four regiments that came from Thorn crossed it safely on their way to cantonments in various directions, and we had three leagues more to go to reach our quarters, a village entirely stripped, we were two squadrons then under the orders of Commandant Chalus, a poor officer, and very pretentious.

Next day, the 3rd of February, I was in orders to go to get oats in five villages, named in the order where I had to go; my instructions were to despatch any vehicles that I could manage to get loaded from each village to that which we occupied, under the escort of two or three men. It followed from this that I had no military precaution to take, and that we were in perfect safety, for at the last village I had to



search there would not be more than three or four men left me, as the others were to go away in proportion to our discoveries of oats. Besides, when we crossed at Thorn, we had been told that the line of our advanced posts was eleven leagues to the front, and no measures for protection had been taken the night before on our arrival at our cantonment. My detachment consisted of twenty-three men, of whom two were sergeants and two corporals; having to return by nightfall I did not take my cuirass, and we set out in a cold of some eighteen or twenty degrees, but beautiful weather, while snow had continued to fall the whole time after our departure from Berlin. They found me a guide, and we made our way across a great plain covered with snow a foot thick, and quite untrodden.

As we left our village I saw at about two leagues distance a small town; that my guide told me was Culmsee, showing that the lake of that name was in the neighbourhood. I thought the town was occupied by our forces, I was separated from it by obstacles of the country that would have prevented my reconnoitering it,

if I had ever thought of doing so; when we came opposite to it, half a league off, my guide showed me at a similar distance, in front on the right, a small house surrounded by a group of buildings, of fairly good appearance, and gave me the name of the first village I was to have dealings with. We were separated from it by a valley and in the bottom was a short canal connecting two lakes, and we made our way to a stone bridge thrown over this canal. Before we reached it, after having descended a steep bank, we came out on a road that evidently led from the village we were approaching to the little town of Culmsee. On the other side of the bridge was an escarpment like that we had come down, and at its top the nearest houses of the village could be seen; the road was bounded by enclosures four feet high, formed as is usual in that country, of two lines of horizontal planks firmly attached to stakes fixed in the ground. The house stood on the right of this road, and had a court before it which I entered, and drew up my detachment in it; this brought out a couple of men of rather distinguished appearance on the door-step, and

five or six women to the windows. I dismounted and explained my mission, begging that in consideration of the shortness of the day they would make haste to load three vehicles with oats, saying that I would give a receipt for them; I asked besides for some bread and beer for my men. All was settled without dispute, and I was even very politely invited to breakfast. The horses were tied to a paling in front of the house, the cuirassiers went into the laundry to warm themselves, and a large fire was made there. I had been five minutes in the saloon when the master of the house told me that two hours before my arrival, he had already had a visit from a detachment of cavalry that came from Culmsee to inquire if there were French in the neighbourhood—this detachment was composed of Prussian dragoons. The neighbourhood of the enemy required precautions that I had not taken, and that according to the tenor of my instructions I was not required to take. I went out that moment, called my men, ordered them to mount, and proceeded to reconnoitre the approaches of the village, and to place vedettes, when all at once a cuirassier rushed out of a building opposite to

the entrance of the court-yard, crying out, "Here they are!"

The enemy came by the side that was masked by this building, and in the first place I had to find out what force I had to meet. This question was soon settled; the sergeant I had sent to the front was received by several carabine shots, and he returned to me at full gallop. Meanwhile I had come out of the court, with a view of forming to the left of the village at the junction of the two roads where they made a kind of open square; but taking a few steps in that direction, the ground that was covered by the barn was thrown open and my unpleasant situation revealed to me. The enemy was coming by the road from Culmsee, and his advanced guard, composed of about thirty black hussars (hussars of Eben), had passed the bridge, and were coming up towards me at a gallop, having already some men opposite the farm outside the palings, the very ones who had fired upon my quartermaster. Behind them, marching by fours, and occupying the whole breadth of the road, came a squadron of dragoons. I perceived all this from the height where I was, and saw I had to meet a consider-

force; but I must say, for it is true, that I felt neither an impulse of fear nor a moment's hesitation. The idea of escaping by the opposite side, which was perfectly open, never occurred to me: besides I could not very well think of it for I should not have known what direction to follow in an unknown country without made roads, and with a hundred and fifty horsemen on my track. There was nothing else to do but to force a passage through the midst of them, push them back beyond the fork of the road they had passed, despatch one or two of the best mounted men to our cantonments to give the alarm, and with the rest do the best I could in the almost desperate position in which I found myself.

If I could have gained the road leading to the bridge it is probable that the pursuit would not have been long, for the Prussians would not have cared to approach too near to our cantonments. But an officer, followed by two dragoons, was already in advance in the road by the side of the houses of the village, and this officer came in front of the hussars, and made signs with his hand that he wished to treat. I had not a moment to lose, for the space widened at the opening of the

road the enemy's column were coming up, and it was evident that if they reached that spot before I did, I should be surrounded, and lose all chance of safety. I said a word to my cuirassiers, made them draw swords, and charged at once. One thing came into my mind at this very serious moment, we had our cloaks, and from a distance they had taken us for dragoons because of our helmets; for the enemy's cavalry coming from Culmsee, where they had spent the night, had watched our progress ever since we entered the plain.

So we had been counted before the attack! Now some weeks since a division of dragoons, the Division Milhaud, had had two or three unfortunate affairs that had discredited this body in the eyes of the enemy, and gave them a confident expectation that they would any way have an easy victory. But in drawing swords, my men threw back the right side of the cloak over the shoulder, discovering their cuirasses, and cuirassiers had a colossal reputation. So I observed a very distinct movement of hesitation in the head of the column; some hussars moved to the rear, and this put their troop in disorder, besides they were coming up

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order to get out of this position, it was absolutely necessary to mix ourselves up with the dragoons. I pressed my horse as much as I could without cruelty, he penetrated into their ranks, and for one moment I saw the senior sergeant by me, but we two were alone, and he soon fell.

Probably Providence had its share in the business, as far as concerned myself, for while I was still in the midst of the turmoil striking and guarding more with the hilt than the blade, I did not receive a single scratch. I took advantage of a weak spot on my right to get out, and turning my horse sharply to the right, forced the escarpment commanding the road we had come by, an attempt I should not have made under any other circumstances. This escarpment was nearly vertical, and at least fifteen feet high; but the snow that covered it was hard enough to give a foothold to my roughshod horse. By good luck, at the moment I made the movement to the right I have spoken of, an old sergeant who had thrown himself forward to bar my passage, let his horse be caught in flank by mine, was thrown down and



formed an obstacle that gave me time enough to prevent my horse being hamstrung when he made his first effort to climb the escarpment. But at this moment a pistol-shot struck me on the right side, the ball pierced my belt of two thicknesses of buff leather and penetrated into the flesh to the depth of its own diameter, without causing me more pain than a smart fillip. I felt I was hit and that was all. After two or three violent efforts, during which I was very near falling back into the road, my horse reached the top of the escarpment, and I set off at the top of his speed, finding myself on the plain, in the direction of our cantonments. I had cast a glance backwards on the scene I was leaving, and had seen nothing but the remains of my poor detachment; the defeat was complete.

The first moment I was not followed, as no one attempted the climb that I had accomplished; but it was not long before I heard the gallop of several horses coming my way, and saw I was desperately pursued by an officer who was gaining ground on me, and by seven or eight dragoons. I had not much chance of escaping

from them, and I made that discouraging reflection while all the time on the watch and digging in my spurs. Then an accident came to my assistance. There was ice upon some portions of the ground we passed over, I had already seen it when I perceived the officer's horse fall, and hoped he would rise without his master, but unhappily they got up together; the advantage I had gained during their short mishap was rapidly diminishing, and I heard them calling to me, in very good French, to surrender. I was still some paces in front of my pursuers, when my horse fell in his turn. I had my leg caught under him, but did not let him go, and he managed to rise to his feet without my being separated from him. His croup was still on the ground when the officer, coming up with me, made a blow at my face with his sword, exclaiming, "Surrender then!" I should really have had nothing better to do, but the sword cut had been warded off, and as he had made me angry I hastily returned some blows, notwithstanding my disadvantageous position, and without in the least thinking of what must inevitably ensue. The dragoons who were behind soon came

up, and I then despairingly pronounced the solemn words, "I surrender." Those who have never found themselves in the position of saying this word, can never conceive the dreadful sinking of heart that it causes. It binds us to observe uncertain and perilous conditions, puts us at the mercy of unknown enemies, possibly abounding in insults and ill-treatment; it often breaks a career, and causes the loss of fair years in a sad captivity; lastly, it causes the deprivation of all intercourse with country and family, and presages long and painful anxieties on account of the sufferer. These reflections and many others quickly crowded upon my mind.

The dragoons who came up to us would certainly have killed me had not some of them been carried on beyond by the impetus of their horses, and if the officer and the old sergeant, whom I had overthrown with his horse, had not thrown themselves across to cover me with their bodies, and parry the blows which were not spared me in the first moments, some of which I also kept off as well as I could with the remains of my sword, which was broken a foot from the hilt. At last the tempest was stilled, and I handed the

remains of my sword to the officer, when he gave some orders that I did not understand.

A dragoon took the reins of my horse, two others followed me, and we set off at a gallop in the direction of Culmsee. We met several dragoons who came at me in succession with raised swords and threatening words, and every time this caused a conversation or dispute between them and my three conductors. I remember that, as we neared Culmsee, I felt a moment of false shame at the notion of the sorry spectacle I should make on entering into this town; then a still more bitter feeling arose together with it, I was going for ever to lose my poor horse who had behaved so well, but had become the victor's prize.

On entering Culmsee I was speedily re-assured as to the reception I should meet, the town is Polish, and the faces of all the inhabitants expressed interest and anxiety for me. I was conducted to the burgomaster's house, situated in the open square, and taken into a room on the ground-floor. Then my conductors took my cloak and my watch, and searched me to find my purse. I had none, for I had taken only one

Frederick with me, and that was small enough to escape their observation in the place where it was put.

In half-an-hour I saw the whole troop I had met come into the square. They dismounted, and the room in which I was became filled with soldiers, who looked curiously but not impertinently at me. However, one came who wanted to take my epaulets, and this occasioned some struggle among them, for there were some opposed to it. I do not know what might have been the result of this contest, had not another interruption come to my aid; a dragoon of large stature, with his left side bared so as to display a large wound in his arm near the shoulder, came quickly up to me, and seizing the man who wished to take away my epaulets with his only serviceable hand, pushed him to the door with such ease that I must think that a well established reputation for strength prevented any idea of resistance. After this exploit he came to me, and made me and his comrades understand that I was the person who had wounded him, and this gave him a right to be my protector. He had a very nice face and I was sorry that I had wounded him.

It was he who had fired the first carabine shot at me, he was one of the men with the officer that advanced, probably to induce us to surrender without resistance. He showed me his wound with a smile, to mark that he bore no malice for it, as I had already understood from the nature of his intervention.

A few minutes after this incident the officer to whom I had given up my sword came in ; he held a bloody handkerchief upon his left cheek, and carried my cloak in his other hand ; he gave it to me, saying, in a proud tone, " We do not rob our prisoners, *not we*." This *we* was an insult, a gratuitous insult, and in bad taste ; moreover, it was a bit of cowardice considering my position. Blood mounted to my face, and I replied as I felt, but soon remembered that an hour before this same man had prevented my being put to death. So we remained some seconds looking at each other ; then he held out his hand to me with a cordial and frank air that removed the vexation he had caused me by his untoward *we*, which he subsequently explained to me. I pressed the hand he extended to me and asked him about his wound ; I learnt he had received it from me, for

in the heat of action I had not been aware of it; he asked after my wounds, and seemed pleased to hear I had only one. Then he showed me that my cloak had seven bullet holes in it. Thanks to the cloak, the persons who shot at me had not aimed at the spot really occupied by my body. I heard that twenty of my men were taken, all more or less seriously wounded, and one of my sergeants so dangerously that they had been unable to think of bringing him in; he had been left in the village where the action took place. A corporal and two cuirassiers had escaped over the frozen lake on our right, and so must have reached our cantonments and given the alarm.

A surgeon had been sent for, but before he came there was a great commotion in the square; they mounted their horses, and made me mount mine, after having required my parole that I would make no attempt to escape, and we left Culmsee, followed by a dozen sledges carrying our wounded, and by our horses led by the hand. We reached two woods at a short distance, and marched fast for two or three hours; then we halted at a village with a good house near it, and the officers went there and took me with them.

We were received by the master and mistress of the house, whom I recognised as Poles from their cool politeness to my introducers and cordiality to myself. They spoke French without any accent.

Whilst on the road from Culmsee to this house. I had time to become a little acquainted with my conquerors. Their leader, who had come forward to parley with us, was the Baron von Werther; the officer who had been the principal cause of my capture was the Count von Moltke; besides, there was a Baron Trenck, great nephew of the famous baron of that name, a young brother-in-law of Baron von Werther, and another, all belonging to the dragoon regiment of Haors. The detachment of hussars was commanded by an officer who was not a gentleman, and whom the others treated with distant coolness, though he had very refined manners. His arm had been pierced by a ball, an accident certainly owing to the clumsiness of one of his own hussars, for my cuirassiers had no cartridges, and so could not use their pistols. He took no more notice of this wound than if he had not received it, and the other officers made no more of it than he did.



As for me, I was the object of the most anxious attention; I was questioned on my country and family; the resistance I had made was magnified; in a word, all kinds of consolation were sought for me. M. de Moltke wished to see my wound; he took me in a room adjoining the saloon, and I undressed. It was not a dangerous wound, as I knew by the small amount of pain it caused me. The ball had penetrated into the flesh to the right of the kidneys, the wound had bled but little, but it caused a swelling as large as an egg. On pressing this the ball could be seen. M. de Moltke removed it from me very cleverly and put a plug of linen in its place; when the operation was finished, he went out and I remained alone. I had hardly resumed my clothes when a door opened opposite to that by which I had entered. The mistress of the house hastened towards me with such a business-like air that I perceived she came to propose to me some means of escape. At the same moment the Baron von Werther entered by the other door, and the poor lady's disappointment was so evident that the Baron said to her in French, probably that I might understand, "I am afraid, madam, I am in your

way." She retired without speaking, but casting on the Baron a look that was anything but tender.

I was fetched to dinner, which I very much needed, not having eaten since the night before. I was assured that my poor cuirassiers, whom I thought of very much, should be carefully attended to. At table, notwithstanding my resistance, I was helped first, and the best selected for me. Then I asked to see my men, and Count Moltke led me into a large room, where they were all gathered round a good fire. They met me with so many exhibitions of affection, and showed so much pleasure at seeing me again, that I felt in a kind of way consoled ; and I was also proud that a foreign officer should see what a French officer was to his soldiers. I made inquiries as to their wounds, but we were going to start again, and I had no time to examine them. One man alone was unwounded, some had suffered very severely ; the only sergeant left me had his head cleft with a sword cut, a gash on his left hand, and his right arm twice thrust through with the point of a sword. The attitude of all these men displayed resolution and resignation.

We resumed our march, night fell, and we were in the depths of the wood. The sledges went heavily, for the snow was thick and unbroken, and our progress was slow through the thick darkness pervading the pine forest. I was again riding my own horse, with the sorrowful thought that we should soon be parted. The boughs were weighed down with snow and struck me in the face; it was horribly cold, and I was assailed by most sorrowful thoughts all through this night march. I had before me the prospect of a lengthened captivity, possibly in Siberia, for many prisoners were sent there, and with the help of fatigue my imagination exhibited pictures to me that were still more doleful than the sufficiently unpleasant reality.

Shortly before day we reached a dirty little town, and for some reason or other they would not tell me the name of it. I lodged with the officers in a house of mean appearance, and perceived that we were clear out of the reach of any pursuit, from a certain air of security that appeared upon their faces, instead of the anxiety and pre-occupation that I had observed the evening before, and which was shown during the

night by halts and expeditions of sub-officers sent to listen, and come and report.

The town where we were must have been occupied by Prussian troops, for I saw two dragoon officers wearing a uniform different from that of the regiment of Haors. I began to suffer from my wound, and also from the leg that the horse had fallen upon; however, the day passed without its being impossible to bear it; the surgeon of the place had been fetched, and what a surgeon! He came with a great pot of grease, with which he rubbed the wound and the parts near it, as well as my leg and thigh, and his air of capability and importance made me anxious as to how he might treat other wounds more severe than mine.

In the evening straw was brought into the room where we had passed the day; mattresses were put on the straw, and we all lay down there except Baron von Werther, who, as commanding officer, had a separate room. Baron von Werther might be about forty years old; he had been lately married, and talked a great deal about his wife and his affection for her. The Count von Moltke was thirty-two, of handsome and distinguished

appearance ; he was tall and well made, but entirely bald.

My pain and my thoughts were overcome by fatigue ; I slept soundly till day, and then I had great trouble in getting on my legs. My whole body was swelled, and the smallest movement painful. In the morning the officers went out on duty, except the Count von Moltke, and he wrote a long report on the occurrences of the day before yesterday, asking me to give him the correct spelling of my name and surname. I was questioned as to the strength of the division my regiment belonged to, but not pressed, on my formal refusal to say anything about it. Then I was informed that I was to go with the rest of the prisoners under the escort of a detachment of hussars, and I felt a kind of sorrow at parting with the officers who had treated me so well ; I thanked them for myself and for my men, whom they had not allowed to want for anything. I was to be carried along in a sledge carefully prepared and provided with blankets. Five other sledges were prepared for my men in the proportion of one to four men ; they were well furnished with fresh straw, and as the cuirassiers had kept their

cloaks, they must have been pretty well protected from cold.

The sergeant, whose wounds I have mentioned, was named Le Duc, and was son of the court coachbuilder under Louis XVI. He had received some education, was at most twenty years old, had a pretty beardless face, and in woman's clothes might have passed for a girl. His history, together with the courage he had shown in the action, had excited the interest of the Prussian officers, and I had arranged that he should be entered on the list as a *cadet*, a rank unknown in France; but in Prussia it removed him from the rank of sub-officer, without any further responsibility for him or for me, than the repayment of the difference of pay, on exchange or delivery, and no claim was ever made for it. I also requested that Le Duc should be placed in my sledge.

At the time of our departure all the Prussian soldiers assembled in the square; many of them had their arms in slings and heads bandaged. I came out at the same time as my cuirassiers were brought out to be put into the sledges awaiting them in the square. Only two of them could

walk without assistance ; I myself was supported by M. de Moltke and another officer, and though my mental and bodily sufferings were great, the sight I saw for the moment removed all my feelings. The Prussian sub-officers and soldiers paid the greatest attention to my wounded, brought them brandy, pressed their hands, and, in a word, when they saw them go away, seemed as if they were parting from old friends. As for me, I was overwhelmed with courtesies, and two of them even came and kissed my hand. I also parted from the officers very amicably, though with less demonstration.

We went under the escort of fifteen hussars commanded by a sergeant, who spoke French as well as we did. These hussars were of the regiment of Eben, and also bore the name of Hussars of Death, because their uniform was black, ornamented with white braid, and on their shakos and sabretaches were death's heads with cross bones. Their faces were not comforting, and we were at their mercy as to their behaviour to us, for I knew that much persuasion had been used towards them not to illtreat us. We had travelled the whole day, and night had

fallen for two or three hours when we stopped in a village before a very large building; it was the mansion of the place. I made my entrance into it, carried by the hussars and preceded by several women bearing lights and crying out "Alas!" Le Duc could walk, but I found it quite impossible to take a single step. At this first halt the anxiety excited by the appearance of the hussars was completely dissipated. They took the greatest of precautions to avoid hurting me; they walked quietly, questioning me by look, and showing attention, with a delicacy I could not have supposed them capable of. They laid me down in a large and very tidy room, while instant preparations were made for warming it, and a little table was set out close to me with a white tablecloth and places for two. Half an hour later we had a dinner that would satisfy anyone at the best of times. Poor Le Duc could not use his arms, and he never recovered the power of the left, but two hussars stayed by us and vied with each other in waiting on us. While we dined, the one bed in the room was made up; I pointed to Le Duc to signify that I wished them to make up another for him, and they brought it immediately. There



was one great difficulty, and that was getting our clothes off. At our first halt the sleeves of Le Duc's coat had been cut in order to dress his wounds, and he could get it off with a little assistance; but my clothes were uninjured except for the shot holes, and anything done to interfere with their condition would have caused me immense inconvenience, not to say pain. So I intended to get myself carried to bed with all my clothes on, though my swelled limbs had much need to be eased from the pressure. Especially my right leg gave me much pain, and filled up my boot so much that I thought it impossible to get it off. When I showed that I meant to go to bed in all my clothes, the hussars remonstrated, and a woman who seemed to be a kind of house-steward adding her influence to theirs, I allowed them to remove my clothing, and they did it with incredible care, skill, and speed. After they had put me into my bed they put Le Duc into his, and the next morning they both returned to dress us. This was not accomplished without difficulty and pain, but with as great care as they had used the evening before. I had especial difficulty in putting on my boot again, not liking to part with it, for fear it should be lost. They gave us break-

fast and we departed. I was able to see my cuirassiers before I was carried to my sledge, and they told me that they had had enough to eat, and had not suffered from cold. I was uneasy about the wounds of some of them ; Le Duc's head was enormously swelled, and he had not slept.

We marched fast without stopping ; the hussars' horses did the whole march without refreshment, and without seeming tired, We halted at night at a hamlet of a few houses only, and Le Duc and I were taken to a mill that was probably the best lodging in the place ; the sergeant and three hussars came there with us. The miller received us with abuse and threats. He seemed so furious and exasperated that I think he would have killed us had we been alone ; but he was strictly restrained by the sergeant and hussars. The man had lost an arm, and had one of the ugliest faces that could be met with. .

This evening I undertook to dress Le Duc's wounds. I was afraid that the cold would produce mortification, and begged the quartermaster to get me a little old linen. The miller harshly refused to find any, but he was obliged to yield. He had a daughter of fifteen or sixteen years,

whose pretty face expressed the deepest consternation and great interest on our account during the exhibition of her father's violence. Having watched me for a moment attempting to make lint, she came quietly and sat opposite to us, looking at a little that had been brought me, and made some herself. Meanwhile the miller was casting savage and angry glances at us, and in a corner of the room the hussars were drinking beer.

It was not at all easy to dress Le Duc's wounds. The sabre cut that had laid open his head crossed the forehead from top to bottom as far as the left eyebrow, where there was a deep cut; the bone was much injured and inflammation very severe. The whole presented the appearance of a serious wound, but was nothing compared to that in the left hand. Having lost his helmet, he had tried to protect his bare head with this hand, and the arm had been cut an inch deep; his fingers had no power. I summoned up my courage, washed his wounds with warm water, and by means of lint and bandages, with the help of the sergeant and the girl, I succeeded in dressing them tolerably. Le Duc bore the opera-

tion without a frown; indeed, he smiled at times, and this increased the respect that the hussars already bore him.

A few minutes afterwards our guardians went to their horses, and the miller, who had gone out during the dressing of the wounds, looking as if he was in a great rage, came back and, seeing us alone, heaped a torrent of abuse upon us. His rage was increased by the carelessness with which we listened, and he rushed upon us with his fist clenched, though we were in such a pitiable condition; but his daughter threw herself between him and us, and spoke to him quietly and strongly. No doubt she had a great deal of influence over him, for he was quieted in a moment, and never renewed the attack. Her mother was dead, and she seemed complete mistress. At the moment I write, her pretty face is as clear before my sight as if I had seen her yesterday, though it is a remembrance of nearly fifty years ago.

Afterwards, when not a prisoner, I saw the miller again, and only the feeling of gratitude that I had for his daughter protected him from the harm I could have done him, not from a

vengeful spirit, but because his odious conduct deserved a severe punishment.

We lay down on the straw arranged by the hussars as best they could. Le Duc and I were both feverish and passed a bad night. Next day we started early. It was a remarkable exception to the general course of the weather in this latitude and time of year that no snow fell during our whole journey, and otherwise we should have suffered much more; it was one or two feet thick on the ground, and our sledges moved without shaking us.

About the middle of the day we heard a sharp cannonade, without knowing whether it came from the right or from the left, because the woods reflected the sound in such a way as to make it appear to come from several quarters. It was the action of Haff, which was the forerunner of the battle of Eylau. At the beginning of the following night we joined the baggage of a Prussian corps that I supposed to be retreating, because it was going in the same direction as ourselves. Our escort caused us to go on the side of the road to get past the convoy, and as it was impossible in the darkness and snow to judge

of the breadth of the road, the sledge in which I was with Le Duc turned over into a deep ditch and passed over us, but without doing us any harm, thanks to the thickness of the snow in which we were buried. Considering our sad state, this accident might have been productive of much mischief. Happily Le Duc's wounds did not suffer from it, and necessity gave me strength to rise alone and go to help him. His first thought was to ask me if I was hurt and relieve me on his own account. The sledge was brought back, we were replaced in it, and an hour later reached a little village crowded with troops. We made a long halt in the street, by no means a fortunate thing, especially for Le Duc and me, because the snow had got into our clothes when we had our tumble in it, and it was exceedingly cold. The room that was to serve us for our night's lodging was heated to twenty-five degrees, and the floor was covered with soldiers lying on one another and snoring in competition. We were placed on benches against the wall and given a little bread and beer. Very soon after our arrival Count Moltke came in, and this seemed to me like finding an old friend. He came close to me and spent

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the rest of the night there. He said he should go to Königsberg next day, and that we should very likely meet there; he seemed very sad. We marched as soon as it was light, always with the same escort.

The cannonade soon recommenced, and seemed nearer. It was the battle of Eylau. The notion that my regiment might be there vexed me much. The dragoons whom we had fought with joined us during a rather long halt in the middle of the day; but they only passed by. Another detachment of their corps had united with them, for they were in greater force, and I saw officers whom I did not know. During our halt I was witness to a specimen of manners that I cannot help putting down here. A young officer of dragoons was sitting in the general room, near the innkeeper's daughter; he was tranquilly smoking his pipe, with his right hand completely buried in the bosom of this girl of, perhaps, seventeen or eighteen years of age; she was pretty, looked modest, and was diligently working away at a bit of sewing, though thus in contact with her neighbour. This took place quite openly under the eyes of her father and mother, and

those of several persons present, and nobody seemed to think it at all extraordinary.

Our entrance into Königsberg was frightful; we reached it at the same time as the wounded; the streets were crowded with sledges on which they were heaped up. Many had died on the road, and lay by the side of the dying. We advanced slowly through this, exposed to the outrages of the people in a state of exasperation at this sight, and of Russian soldiers who had not been present at the battle and wished to revenge their comrades' disasters upon us. Our escort had really to fight for us, and I was several times afraid they would be compelled to yield. In consequence of the crowd, we made a long halt before the house of a little hump-backed apothecary, and he tried like one possessed to stir up the Russian soldiers to cut our throats, and our escort to give up our protection. I was put alone, without knowing the reason, into a private house standing in a little, unfrequented street; I remained there till nightfall without eating, unguarded, and having seen no one but the man who opened the door, and him not again. The time seemed long to me. At



last some one came; it was M. de Moltke. He had learnt what took place on our entry, and seemed to feel it very much. He asked me if I could bear a quarter of an hour's walk with the help of his arm. We tried in the room, and I felt that I could. After going along some crooked streets, we reached an open space full of men. Looks were turned on us, and a Russian soldier driving a sledge made a cut at me with his whip, but missed me. M. de Moltke dashed at him, dragged him out of the sledge, and gave him a sound beating with the flat of his sword. Whilst he made this rush I was separated a few paces from him, and enveloped in the crowd; but nothing hostile was done to me, and I even met with more than one kindly look.

We entered a large room that opened directly upon the square, crowded with wounded Russian officers; there was not an empty seat, and they brought me a chair, of which I was in great need. A few moments afterwards Le Duc was brought in, having remained with the soldiers, and thought he was parted from me for the whole time of his captivity; our union again was due to the care of Count von Moltke. The place where

we were was crowded with Russian wounded; among them was a colonel with a broken leg, crying out piteously; and two French officers of the 4th Dragoons were also brought in, one of them being Dulac, who, I think, became a lieutenant-general. He was then a sub-lieutenant, of fine figure and bearing; he had a high spirit of defiance, and his entrance gave me a pleasant sensation. He was not wounded, but his comrade had suffered severely with three lance wounds, two of them through the chest.

A Prussian surgeon came to attend us, urged by a young Russian infantry officer, whose coat was riddled by shot-holes received at Eylau two days before. He helped in all the dressings with extreme care and activity, and a fantastic and cheerful air; at last, when he saw that every one had had his wants attended to, he quickly let down his trousers and showed to the surgeon and the spectators that his back had been pierced by a ball which had made four wounds, that had not been dressed for forty hours. The cold had stopped the blood; but

as soon as the surgeon removed the clots in washing the wounds, it flowed in frightful quantities.

Next morning we were placed on the sledges with a dozen other soldiers who were taken prisoners and had been placed with my cuirassiers, and we departed from Königsberg without knowing where we going. The evening before, some kind man had brought a jam tart to the guard-room, and Le Duc and I had each a piece of it, and that was all we got to eat the whole day. For a short time we skirted the Frische Haff, frozen hard and looking like a sea of ice; for the tongue of land that parts it from the Gulf of Dantzic, and called the Frische-Nehrung, was two leagues off, and so covered with snow as to be indistinguishable from it. We made our way over the ice, leaving the shore, to proceed to Pillau, our destination, and though we thus pursued a straight line, we got there late from our escort being infantry, as the march had to be regulated by their pace. Before we reached Pillau there had been a mutiny of the new prisoners against the escort, who cocked their guns and

took aim at them. A Prussian sergeant in command of the escort showed great calmness and decision. We intervened, and peace was made.

## CHAPTER III.

THE FORT OF PILLAU—BERNADOTTE AND COUNT KUMINSKI—  
 EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS—RETURN TO THE FRENCH CAMP  
 —COUNT DE MOLTKE WITH GENERAL DUPONT—HOSPITABLE  
 RECEPTION OF BERNADOTTE—GENERAL ESPAGNE—RETURN  
 TO THE 6TH CUIRASSIERS—A REVIEW BY THE EMPEROR—  
 MURAT—THE RUSSIANS—THE JOURNEY TO HEILSBERG—  
 KILLED AND WOUNDED—GENERAL ROUSSEL—GENERAL RE-  
 NAULT—GENERAL DE FRANCE—GENERAL NANSOUTY—PRINCE  
 BORGHÈSE—THE FAMINE—THE EMPEROR DISPLEASED AND  
 MURAT REPRIMANDED.

WHEN we reached the fort of Pillau, we were  
 surrounded by some thirty officers, who  
 had been prisoners there for a longer or shorter  
 period. There were men of all branches of the  
 service, and they overwhelmed us with questions,  
 everyone entirely in his personal interest; then

came the turn of our story, for every new comer was obliged to tell his. I there learnt that I should have forty shillings a month, but five of them kept back to provide bedding. We were lodged in a room where there were seven beds; one of them occupied by a young prince of the house of Darmstadt, in other respects a very insignificant personage. Le Duc's bed was near mine; we went to get our meals in a house on the parade of the fort. This parade was set apart for our place of exercise, and the captive sub-officers and soldiers were also brought there, having to march in file by twos, escorted and guarded by Prussian soldiers, who would not let them lose their distance. I had the pleasure of seeing all my cuirassiers in succession come and join the column of men marched out in this way, except those who died of the effects of their wounds, perhaps from want of attention; for the hospitals were crowded, and the surgeons had not the practised skill acquired by ours during the interminable wars that had put their talents to so many proofs.

Among the prisoners who arrived at Pillau after us, I ought to mention Count Kunitzki.

colonel of a regiment of Polish Light horse; he had been taken in Pomerania by the partisan leader Schill, led to Kolberg, and as he was of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and thus a Prussian subject, he was tried there by a council of war and condemned to be shot. The King of Prussia caused an offer of pardon to be made to him, on condition that he would forsake the Polish cause, and use all his influence in his country to stop the insurrection, which was now assuming dimensions that were very alarming to the Prussian rule in Poland. He refused haughtily, and was going to be executed when the Prince of Ponte Corvo (Bernadotte), being within reach of Kolberg, sent in a flag of truce to say that, if this execution took place, he should immediately have General Kalkreuth shot, who was in our hands. This threat saved Count Kuminski, and he was sent by sea to Pillau, and came thither preceded by the fame his magnanimous refusal had acquired; and he was appropriately received there.

The Commandant of the fort had received orders to exercise the most active vigilance over him, and as this Commandant was a fool, he put an orderly with the Count, with orders not to leave him a

moment. So this orderly sat by his side at table, and marched by him when he moved about in his own room. The horrible nuisance this was to the Count may be imagined. At last the orderly one day took upon himself to smoke, and the Count told him to leave off; the orderly, who was a tall grenadier, made an impertinent answer; but it had hardly left his lips when his pipe was broken on his bleeding face; he was seized, lifted up like a child, and thrown, quite stunned, across the table where he had been sitting, by Kuminski. After this exploit, the Count immediately went to the Commandant of Pillau, followed by all the witnesses of the occurrence, myself among them. We arrived tumultuously, and Kuminski angrily complained of the annoyance to which he was subjected; we warmly supported him, causing it to be understood that this annoyance recoiled on all the captive officers, because, being forced to pass the day in one common room, the keeper set on Count Kuminski was a nuisance to all. The Commandant, who was a tolerably good fellow at heart, gave way, and the orderly was removed.

The Count was small, very well made, had a pretty figure, and was excessively powerful. When



a General he played an important part in the Polish rising of 1831. In 1807 he was thirty years old, and was a colonel; I was twenty-three, and was a sub-lieutenant; but, notwithstanding these differences of age and rank, he became more intimate with me than with all the other officers there; and when I was exchanged, he showed much regret at our separation, in congratulating me on that event. I never saw him again.

Some weeks after my arrival at Pillau, I received a letter from Count de Moltke, informing me that my exchange with his brother had just been sanctioned by the King, and that I should immediately be conducted to the French advanced posts. He added that, knowing that I had received neither the property nor the money I had asked for from my regiment, he sent three Fredericks with his letter, that I might repay him when I was able. A few days afterwards I was informed that I was going to Königsberg, to be thence despatched to the advanced posts. Four other officers received similar communications, among them were De Castres, an Engineer captain of the Geographical Department, and

D'Haubersaërt, son of the President of the Court at Douai. My poor Le Duc remained in captivity till the peace was signed in the month of July following.

We departed in a sledge in twenty degrees of cold; it was the end of March, our sledges were open, but we had straw and our cloaks. Our return was easily accomplished, and it may be said agreeably. At Fischhausen, a little town situated on the road from Pillau to Königsberg, an invitation came to us to breakfast, and we found three ladies in a very comfortable house, one of whom sang to us with the accompaniment of a horrible spinette and in French, of which she did not understand a word "*Femme, voulez-vous éprouver?*"

At Königsberg we were all five quartered together, and given four of the body-guard under the orders of a corporal for our protection; they were very fine men and very polite, being carefully picked soldiers, and better dressed than the others. They had a white uniform, very tight, and very short, a sabretache stuck tight against the left leg, and the enormous hat adorned with a great plume, peculiar to all the Prus-

sian cavalry, except the hussars, who wore the shako.

When I first passed through Königsberg the truncheon of my sword had been taken from me, though it had been courteously left me by the officers I had fought with; and I was much surprised on my return to that city, to see an officer in a uniform I knew not enter the room where I was with my comrades, holding in his hand the remnant of my sword, which, after having asked my name, he restored. Any one who can imagine the crowd of troops that were then at Königsberg, and the excitement caused by the presence of the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, and their staffs, will understand how greatly I was touched by this attention. I must own I was very glad to bring back this relic of my defeat to my regiment, as it was not only broken, but bore many marks of the blows it had received. The Count de Moltke, who came to see me during the day, assured me he had nothing to do with this polite act. He said we should meet again, and, in fact, after two days' march, he came to relieve the officer conducting us, and to deliver us at the advanced posts we were

approaching. We both travelled in the same sledge; he slept on straw with us, and next day at nine o'clock in the morning, we reached the banks of the Passarge, opposite to Braunsberg, a place held by the French.

At Königsberg I had observed that M. de Moltke wore the order of military merit, which I had not seen on him seven weeks before. He told me he owed it to our fight, and that the sub-officer who had helped him to save me, and whom I had thrown down at the mouth of the bridge, had also been decorated with the military medal. This sub-officer came to see me, and so great was the distance that separated the Prussian sub-officers from their officers, that this man would not understand that I was holding out my hand to him; and, from respect, he would not put out his own, and had tears in his eyes when he really was convinced that I thus desired to show him my gratitude.

When the Passarges was crossed, I found myself again among the French.

The little town of Braunsberg is situated about three quarters of a mile from the river, and was occupied by General Dupont and his staff. M.

de Moltke went with us to the General, and he gave him a capital reception, and invited him and us to breakfast. An hour afterwards we were seated at a table with plates for thirty, economically provided, but with plenty to eat. General Dupont had placed M. de Moltke by his side, and during breakfast asked him in what action he had received the wound in the cheek, as the scar looked fresh. Count de Moltke answered that I had given him that wound, and this made me the object of general attention, and caused me much embarrassment. I blushed to the white of my eyes, a fault that I have never been able to cure in all these seventy years, and General Dupont having told me to relate the adventure, I had to go through it, and was doubly embarrassed by the presence of M. de Moltke. Not that without his presence I should have had any notion of puffing the matter, but because, conceal it how I might, it had to be told, that with twenty-three men I had fought a hundred and fifty, that the combat had been hand to hand, had lasted half an hour, and that after all my men had been disabled, it appeared that the Prussians had a much larger number of wounded. Besides, during my rela-

tion, which appeared to be very interesting to all my audience, M. de Moltke behaved delightfully, and several times expressed his opinion that I underrated the merit of the action. I also told of his intervention at a moment when but for him and the sergeant, of whom I have spoken, I should infallibly have been killed. Congratulations then poured on Count de Moltke from all sides, and General Dupont spoke to him as if he owed him the life of a relation or friend. Though this scene caused me some embarrassment, it also caused me great delight. I was twenty-three years old, and a crowd of old tried soldiers were giving me approving glances; in the evening one of General Dupont's secretaries told me that the General had several times mentioned my affair during the day, and was much struck with the account of it.

Count de Moltke left us an hour after breakfast; we embraced, and I never saw him again. I heard in 1829 from the Count de la Roche-Aymon, that he had become a general, and was dead. He belonged to an illustrious Danish family, and at the very moment when I am writing

this the Danish Ambassador at Paris is a Count de Moltke.

From Braunsberg we were taken to the headquarters of Bernadotte (then Prince of Ponte-Corvo, and afterwards King of Sweden), commanding our first *corps d'armée*, and Dupont's division in it. The Prince received us exceedingly well, offered us money and linen, telling us in the kindest way that his purse and baggage were at our service. We did not take advantage of his offers; for my part, I had found an officer on General Dupont's staff, who advanced me the three Fredericks which I wished to return to Count de Moltke. I never saw any one that had so much the bearing of a great nobleman as Bernadotte, though he had the far from refined Gascon accent.

My comrades in captivity went in different directions. I proceeded towards the headquarters of the division that my regiment belonged to. I reached it next day at evening, and was coldly received by General Espagne, under whose orders we were. During the dinner he had asked me to, he broke out sharply upon me, accusing me of want of caution, and of being the cause of

the loss of my detachment. This took place before twenty witnesses, whose sympathy for me I could easily perceive. I also saw that Commandant Chalus had kept silence about the instructions he had given me when sending me out to forage, or rather he had said he gave me different ones from what I have related in the beginning of this account. I was at first confused by the attack of General Espagne, and the severe looks he cast at me; but I regained my presence of mind enough to repeat the plain facts, and to make it be understood that my orders being to divide my detachment by sending back the men in succession to escort the oats that I was to despatch from five villages named in my orders, it was impossible to suspect that there was any danger at all. If I had been bound to take the military precautions usual in range of the enemy, I should not have had time to search even two villages, the day is so short in that latitude on the 3rd of February. This explanation was successful; but I was grieved to have had to give it. I saw that I had been spoiled by the Prussians, and by the reception I had met with at General Dupont's head-quarters, and—due to a circumstance that



would not tell in my favour any more—the presence of Count de Moltke.

From the day of my catastrophe, I had heard nothing of my regiment; it is true that some hours after my capture a trumpeter had been sent bearing a letter with a few lines from me to relate what had happened, but it was possible the letter had not been delivered, and I knew not what had been thought of me. In consequence of these thoughts, I moved towards my regiment the next day with some anxiety. Night had fallen when I reached the first village it occupied, and I there found the very troop I belonged to. I was received with open arms by my old captain Baudichon, a kind and brave man, with whom I had always been on the best of terms; but I confess that the greeting which affected me most on that evening was from my orderly, my poor Jouette. The captain, in my absence, had kept him in his service, so he heard of my return at once, and followed me into the room where the officers were. While I was embracing them, he took me in his arms from behind, laid his face against my back and began to weep.

Next morning I proceeded to the colonel, who

was living a league away from our village; he gave me such a warm greeting as proved how glad he was to see me again. Major Chalus had not given him an exact account of the instructions I had received; in his presence I proved the facts, and he could not persist in his original assertion.

I was the last sub-lieutenant but one in the regiment. A month later I was made lieutenant, and this promotion did not displease any one of my comrades. The senior sub-lieutenant, Marulaz, behaved perfectly well to me on this occasion; before that I had also received more than one proof of affection from him. He was forty years old, and had no fortune but his sword; he was a strict soldier, performing his duties with scrupulous exactness, seldom smiled, and never laughed. I have preserved the remembrance of him in my mind as a specimen of a rare species. There were three brothers Marulaz in the 6th Cuirassiers.

My regiment was not present at the battle of Eylau, and subsequently the armies remained facing each other, we holding the left bank of the Passarges and the Prussians the right. This

river falls into the Frische Haff, running from south to north; it varies in depth, forming several fords, and is not more than fifty leagues in length. On the right, in front of our line, resting on the Halle, a little river tributary to the Pregel, was the corps of Marshal Ney, with head-quarters at Gutstadt.

To give an idea of the miseries that arise from such a misadventure as mine, I must say, that on my return to the regiment I possessed nothing but what I had on and one shirt that I had bought at Pillau, in order to have a change during my captivity. My portmanteau had been sent to the Prussian advanced posts with a sum of twelve pounds, and this I had never received. So I required an entire new outfit, and had two horses to buy. The regiment advanced me what was necessary, and the Colonel himself came to my assistance with all the zeal of friendship. I soon found myself owner of a horse from the Ukraine, as light as a bird and never wearied, and of another that was good but of a more ordinary kind. A little later I purchased for ten thalers a Cossack horse that had been left behind sick; he recovered and would have done me good service

but for the little event that deprived me of him, as will be related in its proper place.

The country held by the two armies was soon exhausted, and became the scene of the most terrible misery to be found in history; all the houses were stripped to give the horses the straw of the thatch; there were no oats, and the cavalry regiments received orders to obtain them by any possible means. I was detached with thirty picked men to go on the left bank of the Vistula, with *carte blanche* to seize upon oats wherever I could find any, and also get the vehicles necessary to transport them. I made four days' march without finding any, but in every village that I passed I requisitioned the best horsed carts and took them with me. I had crossed the Vistula and was following the valley downwards; thus I drew near to Dantzic, now being besieged. This operation was entrusted to the corps d'armée of Marshal Lefèvre, which was short of cavalry, and what it had were Germans. The valley of the Vistula is very rich, and the villages in it are numerous; those I had passed through had nothing at all left, for the Marshal had spared those nearest to him, and had sent to

those at a greater distance for his requirements. At last I entered within the circumference of his reserve, and, to begin with, came upon the most beautiful farm I have ever seen in my life. A square court, at least half a mile in circumference, composed of fine buildings, enclosed it entirely. It was occupied by a detachment of Saxon Dragoons, which was absent when I came, having only left a few men and a son of Marshal Lefèvre, who was put there for some reason I do not know. He was known in the army under the name of *Coco*; his father had never been able to do anything with him and carried him in his train. He and the Saxons both refused to allow me to take any oats, though there was an enormous quantity in the farm; but having received special orders, I put them aside. The few dragoons that were there mounted their horses, most likely to go for a superior force; but while they were gone I had my sacks filled and loaded my train of vehicles, though *Coco* opposed me. The countrymen who drove the carriages helped me as zealously and actively as if they had done it for themselves. When everything was loaded, I speedily got on the road, quite resolved to protect my oats, and

yet not caring to have a disturbance with the Saxons, our allies. Happily I did not meet them. For four days I had been obliged to march slowly, as I was searching the villages that were on my route; but the return was another thing. I had taken care of the peasant-drivers, so that, as we went through each place again, I easily found means to replace the horses that were tired. Having been away a week, I returned to my regiment with a long file of vehicles, and was very well received. My luck had been exceptional, for it appeared that the detachments of other regiments that went at the same time as I did were far from obtaining an equally good result.

During this journey I met with a quite unexpected danger. In one of the villages where I stopped for the night, I was lodged in a house occupied by a widow and her daughter of seventeen or eighteen years of age. It was the beginning of May, and in the evening after dinner I went out for a walk with these ladies; we left the village by a road enclosed on both sides by the palings about four feet high that I described before. When we reached a spot where the road turned,

and we could not see far before us, I heard a curious noise like that caused by a storm, while there was not a breath of wind in the air. Then my two companions climbed the palings with symptoms of the greatest fear, without stopping for the precautions that women usually take in the like case, and I followed instinctively. We had hardly got over when a column of pigs, at least a hundred and fifty feet deep, broke into the road with such an impetus that nothing could have stopped them, and if we had not been sheltered they would have thrown us down and trampled us under their feet; and according to what the ladies told me we should have been taken up dead, or so crippled as to be fit for nothing. These pigs were taken to the woods in the morning, and they got their food in the evening, and this made them so excited that when they got to the village they were like an avalanche, and so compacted together that if any one had fallen upon them, instead of beneath them, he would not have come to the ground till they stopped and dispersed.

A few days after my return the division to which we belonged was assembled to be reviewed

by the Emperor, which had not been done since Monteschiare, that is to say, two years before. I had never seen the Emperor, and arrived at the place in a great state of excitement. At last I was going to have my first sight of the author of the immortal campaigns in Italy and Egypt, the conqueror of Austerlitz. The regiments were drawn up in single line, and had been waiting an hour when a group of horsemen appeared on the horizon and quickly approached us. At the head, fifty paces in front of a brilliant staff, was in full relief a man of the most martial figure and appearance; he wore a knightly tunic covered with embroidery, white pantaloons, and half high riding boots; a cap of sable with a red busby bag, and bearing a plume of black ostrich feathers shaded his head, an antique sword hung on his left side, suspended slantwise from the shoulder, and its jewelled hilt glittering in the sun. I thought it was the Emperor, but it was only Murat, the Grand Duke of Berg, who, in his position of Commandant of all the cavalry, came to do the honours of the division to the Emperor. He passed at a gallop from left to right, and then returned at a walk along the



whole length of the front, stopped at the left and waited,

The delay was not long; a much more numerous group soon deployed from the end of the plain whence he had come. First there were the Mamelukes, covered with gold, with their splendid horses bounding as if frantic under the rein; then came the aides-de-camp, and a hundred paces after them the Emperor, followed by his immense staff; the rear was brought up by the squadron of Chasseurs of the Guard on duty. The Emperor was far from having the martial and terrible appearance of the personage I had at first taken for him. He wore a grey riding coat of the plainest appearance; a little hat looped with black, with no ornament but the cockade; the riding coat was unbuttoned and just allowed the colonel's epaulettes to be seen on the undress uniform of the Chasseurs of the Guard, the only uniform he ever wore on a campaign after he became Emperor. He had white breeches and waistcoat, and soft riding boots. He was mounted on a beautiful bright grey Arab horse; the housings of the saddle were fringed with a rich trimming of large bullion, and the

stirrups were plated with gold, as were the bit and the buckles of the bridle.

He passed across our front to the right at a walk; when he got to the end he ordered the division to form to the right, form troops and dismount. At that time and till the fall of the Empire the regiments were eight troops, forming four squadrons; the officers were also dismounted and took post on the right of their troops, in the order of their rank. As the Emperor came to each regiment he received the written statement, and gave it to the major-general, and then asked the colonel as follows :

“What is your effective strength? How many men in hospital, at the small depôts, sick in cantonments, or absent from any other cause?”

He put the same questions to the captains, and woe to those whose memory or knowledge was at fault; words of reproof and looks that did not bespeak the near approach of favours gave them some cause for unpleasant reflections. This happened to Colonel Merlin, commanding the 8th Cuirassiers; he became so confused in his answers that the result was an immense difference between

the total of his effectives, and the amount made by summing up the different heads. When the Emperor came to my troop, having put his questions to my captain, as I stood on his left, he stopped before me and asked the colonel why my horse's equipment was not in uniform. The colonel replied that I had just come out of the enemy's prison and had had no time to procure the equipment. The Emperor did not like anyone allowing himself to be taken prisoner, especially in the cavalry, and he looked angrily at me and said,

“Why your division has never seen the enemy yet.”

I did not venture to speak, and his angry eye fixed steadily upon me distressed me much. The colonel was beginning to explain the circumstances, when General Espagne, who had received me so badly on my return from captivity, came forward and passed a great encomium on my conduct on the occasion. During his recital the Emperor's face underwent a complete metamorphosis, and when he had heard it all he made me a low and gracious bow.

We defiled at a trot by squadrons; coming to the Emperor swords were raised in the air with a

shout of "Vive l'Empereur." It was a formidable shout, and the review seemed satisfactory to the person in whose honour it had taken place. As he passed our regiment he said to Colonel d'Avenay :

"Colonel, on the first action a bullet or a General's stars."

A few days after this review, our division got orders to pass to the left bank of the Vistula and march on Dantzic; the third day we received counter orders, and were told to return with all speed whence we had come. The Russians had attacked Marshal Ney and made an offensive movement on the whole line of the Passarges, and forced it in pursuit of the third corps. The whole army marched against them at once, and forced them to retrace their steps. To conform to this movement we marched day and night, only taking a couple of hours' rest from time to time, to give our horses green rye, that we cut, to eat, and ourselves devour a little bread. When we reached the Passarges all the columns were in motion to cross it, the infantry on little trestle bridges, the artillery and cavalry by fords. Never had I beheld such an imposing sight; there were

considerable undulations in the ground with a natural slope to the river bank, and the different columns debouching rapidly from all sides, wound round, disappeared and appeared again from the inequality of the ground. We proceeded towards the smoking remnants of a large village that could be seen half a league off. On arrival we were grieved by the sight of the most horrible spectacles of war. Marshal Ney, retiring before the Russians, had there left all of the wounded he could not transport any further; when the Russians had passed the Passarges they also had there left all of theirs that were in the neighbourhood; when again they in their turn were driven headlong back they set fire to the village, as is their practice in such circumstances. All the wounded were burnt to about the number of eleven hundred, and we passed through the village amid their remains, and a frightful smell of burnt flesh. Shouts of horror and revenge were raised in our ranks, and this was the source of the character of cruelty that on our side was only a reprisal provoked at the first encounter with the Russians. The prisoners were murdered; it was a war of extermination.

On the 9th of June, 1807, the Russians attempted to make a stand in advance of Gutstadt, but they were overthrown. According to their calculations, their halting place ought to have been Heilsberg; they had studied the ground, raised several strong redoubts, and fancied they were in a way to make us suffer a memorable reverse. The night before at Gutstadt no regiment of our division had been in action: only a few bullets had reached us. Here commenced the era of privation that we suffered. We found the villages fearfully devastated, the inhabitants fled or dead in their houses; in one of them there were five corpses side by side, and a child of twelve still breathing. Colonel d'Avenay took him, had him attended to, saved his life, and then kept him as a servant, and left him a sum of sixty pounds by will. I met him at Paris in the Palais Royal many years after his master's death; he was then in the service of the Duke of Reggio.

We arrived on the field of Heilsberg on the 10th about ten in the morning; the action had commenced but feebly, and we commanded the position from the height where we were.

Below, and between us and such part of the Russian army as we could see, there was a deep and steep ravine with a stream at the bottom. Before us its direction was parallel to our front, but it turned sharply to the right and extended any distance on our flank, leaving on its left bank a large flat of about three quarters of a mile in extent, bounded on the other side by a wooded hill. Not a single soldier could be seen on this plain, while behind the spot where the ravine turned, twenty thousand Russians were massed in column, with artillery in the intervals and some cavalry. To the left of this mass, opposite to us, though a little to our right, several lines of cavalry were drawn out, about sixty squadrons, several being regiments of the Imperial Guard. Opposite to us, on the further side of the ravine, was a village held by the enemy, and on one side of the ravine a battalion in line that had probably been forgotten and left there. On our left, from the other side of the wood on the hill, there was a dropping fire of skirmishers, with a few cannon shots. From the point at which we appeared on the scene, looking on every side, nothing could be seen but our divi-

sion descending at a walk in column of sections to the neighbourhood of the ravine, in the direction of the village and the line of cavalry before mentioned. There were only some Bavarian skirmishers before us not firing. If the Russian battalion on our side of the ravine had retired two hundred paces, it would have escaped its destined fate, either by resting on the ravine, or, still better, by putting it between them and us ; but it was charged by the two first squadrons of my regiment and entirely destroyed. I was not then engaged, as I belonged to the third squadron, and it had been detached to the left a few minutes before to provide against anything apprehended on that side. A few moments later we rejoined the main body of the regiment, thus making three squadrons. The fourth regiment on our right had its right flank about two hundred paces from the bend formed by the ravine that I have mentioned. This ravine crossed our front at about a hundred paces' distance, and the position rose from right to left, so that the left of the line was fully twenty paces higher than the right. The artillery of our division, two six-inch howitzers and four four-pounder guns, had gone into action



a little apart, in advance of our left, and fired uninterruptedly upon the enemy's artillery and the cavalry behind them. The fire in that line was flanking, the enemy receiving it from right to left. The fire we received from them was the same for us. We were within range of grape, and yet our loss was inconsiderable all the time we remained in this position. But one of our guns was dismounted. Our gunners showed much more skill, and we could clearly see their shot strike in the Russian ranks. Anyone may imagine the hopes that accompany each discharge at such a time, that it may make the greatest number of victims. This can only be understood by those who have felt it; it is natural, though inhuman, and while I experienced it I remembered M. de Moltke, and could not help thinking that those who fell in our sight might perhaps have been our friends if we had known them.

The 7th and 8th Cuirassiers were behind us in the second line. When I had gained more experience in strategy I was confirmed in the opinion I then took up, that we had been placed in a bad position for no useful purpose. Our division was alone on the spot, with no troops in

support, and if we had been left a little more to the rear, the undulations of the ground and its great height would have impaired the accuracy of the enemy's fire, and we should have been spared the grape shot, and musketry of the infantry holding the village opposite to us across the ravine. Some Bavarian hussars who were employed as vedettes for us had been passed across the ravine to reply to this invisible infantry. They performed their duty bravely, with no other result than the loss of men and horses. At last an infantry regiment came up, crossed the ravine with perfect steadiness, and, once on the other side, rushed at the village at the double, entered it by all sorts of openings, even where there was only room for one man to go, and we soon heard nothing but a confused sound of shots and terrible shouts, amid clouds of smoke and bursts of flame from the captured burning village.

At this moment there was another sight for us on the right; the Russian corps that was massed in column there advanced rapidly, separated from us as far as the front of the cavalry was from the artillery. The guns of our division replied with

the disadvantage of inferior numbers. There were no French troops to meet this formidable column; as far as sight could reach to the rear of our right, there seemed no obstacle that could stop it, and in watching its progress there was a nice time when we looked to the rear, for it had overlapped us considerably. About a third of a mile from us, facing this column, there was a fold of the ground, making a little valley with its bottom out of sight, and which was scarcely more than an undulation. The Russians had only just attained the crest of this undulation, when we saw a cloud of smoke arise from the bottom, with a loud explosion that continued without interruption. It was a very well sustained fire, in concert with that of two batteries of artillery which fired with such speed and precision that we could perceive the terrible effect in the enemy's ranks, since we commanded the whole spectacle from a short distance. The head of the column was literally crushed. We were witnesses to the efforts of those in the rear to penetrate into the valley, whence a thousandfold of thunder seemed to be vomiting forth death; but their attempts failed, and a movement to the rear

enabled us to see the brave defenders of the valley, who, with only one to ten, had arrested an advance that would otherwise have decided the fate of the day. They then made their appearance on the ground they had covered with dead, marching steadily in one thin line, and following the movement of the Russians, ceaselessly bearing them down with their fire, to which there was only a disorderly and uncertain reply, doing but little damage. It was the Fusiliers and two batteries of the Guard who had thus covered themselves with glory. Their commander, brave General Roussel, was killed in this action.

Our division was electrified by this sight; faces in which might have been detected apprehension at the imminence of the danger of being turned and taken in flank and rear by a superior force, recovered a courageous expression. At this moment the Grand Duke of Berg (Murat) came up to us; he came from our right rear, followed by his staff, passed at a gallop across our front, bending forward on his horse's neck, and as he passed at full speed by General Espagne he flung at him one word alone which I heard, "Charge!" This order, given without any further directions for an attack

on sixty squadrons of picked men, by fifteen unsupported squadrons, seemed to me the more difficult to understand, since in order to get at the enemy there was a nearly impracticable ravine to be crossed by twos and fours, and it was then necessary to form under the enemy's fire a hundred paces from his first line. In case of a check we had no possible means of retreat, but the order was given and the thing had to be done. The 4th Cuirassiers and ourselves formed sections to the right, and marched to the nearest point of the ravine to the enemy; our battery of light artillery came down at a gallop and took up a position close by, and on the right of the point where we were going to execute our perilous enterprise. They immediately opened a quick fire of grape to reply to the increase of the enemy's fire at sight of our movement, and to do all possible to stop the first line, now advancing at a walk to meet us. As soon as the 4th Cuirassiers had formed its first squadrons, they rushed upon this line, being overlapped by its right, and repulsed it; but they soon came back in disorder, being in turn repulsed by the first line that had rallied, and the second in support. The artillery

on both sides had ceased its fire, and nothing could be heard but the dreadful shouts which the Russians utter on such occasions, mingled with some from our men, though we tried to prevent it. We charged to assist the 4th, and they soon rallied when they reached the brink of the ravine.

I think an incident was of service to us which happened just as our two first squadrons had passed, and when I was coming out of the ravine at the head of the third. The roof of one of the burning buildings of the village I have mentioned being very near the spot where we crossed, fell in, and there arose such a dense cloud of smoke and ashes cast upon us by the wind, that we were covered and enwrapped in it, and probably the enemy's line we were marching on was blinded by it. I cannot understand why but for this at the first moment it did not endeavour to crush us by its numerical superiority, and to throw us back into the ravine which we could never have re-passed. Generally during this day the Russian troops we had to meet did not display a resolution worthy of their reputation; the check they had received the evening before at Gutstadt was not

of sufficient importance to have demoralised them even for the moment; besides, the greater part of those present had taken no part in that action. The next occurrences will be found to support this assertion.

On getting out of the cloud of smoke I have mentioned, and just as I had formed up the section under my command, being the first of the third squadron, I perceived about fifty paces to my left the head of a column of Russian dragoons advancing at a walk upon our flank towards the spot where we had crossed the ravine, the last of the three squadrons following me being hardly clear of it. It seemed clear to me that if I continued to follow the movement of the two squadrons that preceded me we should be turned, flanked in line, and in the worst position cavalry can be placed, and without waiting for orders I turned sharply to the left, quite resolved to be killed rather than that the enemy should accomplish his purpose. Contrary to my expectation, on seeing me march to meet them, they stopped and began a fire of carbines that hit no one. As I measured the depth of this column, the thought of compelling it to retreat by a charge pressed home

seemed to me an absurdity; it was closed in between the ruins of the village and a little marsh, such as there are in all the plains of Eastern Prussia. These marshes are some of them not more than thirty paces in diameter, and present the appearance of fine turf, being not the least dangerous to a man on foot, and quite safely passable by him without being wetted; but a horse sinks in so that he can only be extricated with ropes, and no length of pole will reach the bottom. I accordingly stopped all the more, because after the example given me the three last sections of my squadron had not followed me, and had gone to join the body of the regiment, its left resting on the little marsh which I had on my right, and on its right the 4th Cuirassiers. There was then a breathing time which can no more be accounted for than a quantity of incidents that take place in war, sometimes to assist, sometimes to overthrow all previous arrangements. We were hardly fifty paces from the Russians, who were ten times more numerous than ourselves, for, from some reason I have not tried to fathom, the 7th and 8th Cuirassiers had remained on the other side of the ravine,



whence our artillery fired on the enemy's left extending far beyond us. In this very critical position only a slight effort was required in order to crush us; but they made no such effort, and for a time, the length of which I can hardly calculate, they contented themselves by firing very wild carbine shots at us, together with volleys of cries and abuse, some of it in very good French, and combined with threatening gestures. The situation could not last long; a sort of fluctuation having become apparent in the ranks opposed to us, we took advantage of it to charge, and at the moment had a notable success. But it did not continue, and we were driven back to the brink of the ravine. The impossibility of getting across did more to rally our cuirassiers than all our efforts could have done; they turned like desperate men, and we soon again saw the enemy who had been in pursuit of us put to flight. This time we gained more ground, probably because orders had been given to the Russians not to continue to hold the position they were defending. So their second and third lines, instead of supporting the first, had been executing a retrograde movement, while the first was in pursuit of us, so that they

found their supports much further off than they could have expected. This first line, hotly pursued and losing several men, disappeared between the intervals of the others to rally behind them, and we, in the disorder necessarily consequent on our pursuit, found ourselves in front of a fresh body of troops, in good order, who did not fail to advance to meet us as soon as they were unmasked. Here again they did not display the decision that ought to have been expected of them; we were able to rally and return successfully to the charge, and at last succeeded, after a number of reverses and successes occupying a considerable part of the day, in remaining masters of the ground on which we had fought; but after the last but one of our charges, finding ourselves under fire at short range of the column repulsed by the Fusiliers of the Guard, only a hundred paces from a line of cavalry that was quite fresh, our two regiments, demoralised by their losses, went to the right about without orders, and fled at full speed. The officers were compelled to follow this movement. Then I turned, finding I was hotly pursued by a dragoon, and saw Colonel d'Avenay alone on foot and already

passed by several of the enemy's horsemen. I thought he was lost; threw myself in despair upon the dragoon that had been after me, who, having missed me, was turning back upon the Colonel. He fell at the first blow I gave him; but when I looked up again, I was passed by, surrounded, hustled, and my horse carried away by those of the Russians. The Colonel had disappeared in the turmoil, and I thought my fate would be the same, for I was in the enemy's ranks, pressed by them as if I had been one of themselves, and galloping in the same direction. No blow was struck at me for the short time I remained in this position, and I observed on the faces of those in contact with me an expression rather of terror than of animation. Thanks to the power and speed of my horse, I soon got out of this throng; and tried by inclining to the left to depart from the general direction towards the right; but I had no sooner got a little more at liberty than I became the object of pursuit to several horsemen, and suffered a very disagreeable moment; for three hundred paces in front of me, without a chance of going in any other direction, arose an ob-

stacle of height not to be ascertained at the first glance; it was one of those boundaries of estates like many others in the plain where we were that I have described elsewhere. It was made like the others of two horizontal planks, and was about three feet and a half high; but my horse had for several hours been nearly always at a gallop in a ground covered with furrows, and I was afraid that the effort I was going to require of him might be beyond his strength. But it did not prove so; at the critical moment I raised him with all the force of the instinct of self-preservation, and in one moment we were over, safe from any risk, for the proceedings on the other side secured me against pursuit. Columns of infantry and cavalry were now really coming to support us. The great Russian mass that had fired on us during its movement in retreat, kept on retiring, and already seemed a long way off. The cavalry that pursued us had been stopped by the height of the obstacle I had been obliged to leap, which did not extend to the place whither the fugitives of my regiment and of the 4th Cuirassiers had betaken themselves. The rally was sounded on all sides and our men straggling over the plain no longer

turned their backs to the enemy. By myself I managed to reform about a strong squadron composed of men of the two regiments, and I brought them as quickly as possible to the spot where I thought they might be useful.

As the Russian cavalry had orders not to prolong the contest, we went in pursuit of them, reinforced by the Saxon Cuirassiers and the 20th Chasseurs, my first regiment. Thus we arrived beneath the redoubts of Heilsberg, which had been constructed by the Russians long before; for, as I said above, they had selected this position and thought it would be the scene of a conclusive struggle between the armies. We were received by the most frightful fire of guns and musketry possible. The Saxon Cuirassiers, a fine troop composed of old soldiers, could not face it; most part of them gave back. I saw young officers, lads of sixteen, do all they could to rally them, and when they could not, return themselves to the post of danger. Our infantry came late to the field of action, and also abandoned it. The plain was covered with men flying in disorder. Most fortunately night fell, for if the cavalry that had retired by the intervals of the redoubts had been again

launched at us, it must have made an immense slaughter without meeting with opposition.

We remained there very uselessly till night fell, and then retired and repassed the famous ravine, establishing our bivouac on the spot we held before we passed it. The roll was called; in the morning the regiment had twenty-two officers present; three had been killed, fourteen more or less seriously wounded. Among the latter was Colonel d'Avenay, whom I had supposed to be killed or taken prisoner. A providential chance together with the devotion of Lieut. Marulaz had extricated him from the cruel situation in which I had seen him. Marulaz in the middle of the struggle had dismounted and compelled him to mount on his horse with his assistance, and it had brought him out with no more wounds than two sabre cuts on the left arm which had been received previously. As for Marulaz, after this brave action, he had thrown himself on one of the little quagmires I have already mentioned, and stayed there till the retreat of the Russians took place a short time after. We found him safe and sound, and during the rest of the day he was spared, so that he

was one of the five officers who alone remained unwounded.

To sum up, the results of this affair were not at first appreciable by us from anything but our enormous loss, but it produced a glorious mention of us in the Gazette and a number of decorations, in which I shared. Worn out with fatigue and wetted through by a fine rain that had fallen for several hours, I went to lie down by the Colonel under a shelter of pine boughs the cuirassiers had made for him. He had seen me coming back towards him at the moment of our retreat, and thought I was killed. He thanked me warmly, and credited me with much more than I deserved in the matter of saving him. I had been half-an-hour with him when I was sent for by Brigadier-General Renault, commanding our division, General Espagne and General Foulers, the senior of the two Generals of Brigade, being wounded. General Renault, having to receive orders from the Grand Duke of Berg, and not knowing where he was, desired me to find him and receive his orders.

Our led horses had not come up; I was obliged to mount again upon the one that had carried me

all day, and had scarcely had time to eat a feed of oats. I had to traverse without any direction the whole field of battle, covered with killed and wounded, the latter groaning and crying, and begging for help that no one brought them. I was followed by two cuirassiers, and we three could not give these poor wretches the assistance they claimed in this heart-rending manner; nearly all begged for water. On the skirt of a wood that I entered, the corpses were so heaped up that our horses would not pass, and we were obliged to dismount to find a place where they were not so thick. In this wood I found an infantry brigade commanded by a General whom I knew not. As they were within short range of the enemy's redoubts, strict silence was kept and orders given against lighting any fires. For all my inquiries, I could get no information about the Grand Duke of Berg. After making a long march in the wood I came out of it and found myself in presence of the first division of heavy cavalry, commanded by General Nansouty, and he began by asking me if I knew where the Grand Duke of Berg could be. General de France, commanding the Carabineer Brigade, and Prince Borghèse, com-



manding the 1st Regiment, were present and knew me. I conversed with them a quarter of an hour, telling them what I knew of the affair that had taken place, and the part our division had played. They told me that, having only just reached the spot, they had been unable to take a share in the action, while M. Thiers, in his account of the battle of Friedland, which took place four days later, makes this first cavalry division cut a figure there, though weakened, as he says, by considerable losses on the day of Heilsberg.

I returned to our bivouac worn out with hunger and fatigue, finding my way through the woods and darkness with very great difficulty. During my absence an officer of Murat's staff had brought an order to remain where we were. The baggage had not come up; we had no bread or anything else to eat. I had a little tea made in a bit of a canister shot case. The ground was covered with pieces of these cases, and shot and muskets. The day was spent in burying our dead, and putting the living in order as far as might be. We made up two weak squadrons; Marulaz had command of the first and I of the second. The Colonel and

our other wounded were taken to the rear, and the regiment found itself under the orders of Major Chalus. Next day, about five in the morning, the train arrived. We had bread, but very little of it; General Renauld gave me half a bottle of beer, which I shared with Marulaz; since the preceding evening we had been living on the grass which we plucked and chewed.

At ten o'clock the Emperor passed through us, and was saluted by acclamations to which he seemed to pay no attention, appearing gloomy and out of spirits. We learnt later that he had no intention of attacking the Russians so seriously as had been done, and especially had desired not to engage his cavalry. The Grand Duke of Berg had been reprimanded for this, and followed the Emperor with a tolerably sheepish air.

We again passed the night on the field of battle, lying side by side with the dead; then next day we commenced our march, after getting a ration of bread.

## CHAPTER IV.

SUFFERINGS OF THE ARMY—MARCH UPON TILSIT—PASSAGE OF THE PREGEL—THE PEACE OF TILSIT—DESCRIPTION OF THE RAVAGED COUNTRY—COLONEL D'AVENAY MADE GENERAL—ILLNESS—THE COLONELS OF THE 18TH AND 19TH DRAGOONS—BARON COLLAS AND HIS HOUSE—THE CASTLE OF ROHNSTOK—COUNT AND COUNTESS HOCKBERG—THE BARONESS RICHTHOFFEN, PRINCESS OF HOLSTEIN, AND HER CHILDREN—DEPARTURE FROM SILESIA AND MARCH TO SPAIN—REVIEW AT CASSEL BY THE EMPEROR—CAPTAIN'S RANK CONFERRED BY THE EMPEROR—THE PRINCE OF NEUCHÂTEL—SAINT VICTOR—THE EMPEROR AT RUFFEC AND COLONEL "STUPID"—EUGENE DE HAUTEFEUILLE.

WE were a considerable body of heavy cavalry under the orders of Murat, and we had with us two other corps d'armée, one being that of Marshal Davoust. So we proceeded in the direc-

tion of Königsberg, while the great part of the army under the Emperor's orders marched upon Friedland. Next day, the 14th of June, we arrived befor Königsberg, an unfortified town. with its outskirts covered by some field-works, and by a corps made up of Russians and Prussians. A pretty sharp cannonade was exchanged, and while we watched our infantry carrying the works and forcing their way into the suburbs with great interest, another cannonade arose at a very small distance to our rear, and we saw the orderly officers hastening from that quarter, looking for the Marshals and Prince Murat, to inform them that a force of the enemy of unascertained numbers was coming along the road by the side of the Frische-Haff, in the direction of Königsberg. Our division and two of dragoons then charged front to the rear at a gallop with really admirable precision and unity, and supported by two batteries of artillery, advanced rapidly to meet this new enemy.

There was no encounter; the reconnoissance that had met our people and caused the information to be sent fell back slowly without any close pursuit; the corps behind them of five thousand

Prussians, nearly all infantry, and with twelve guns, sent a flag of truce as soon as we were in sight and surrendered. The day was very interesting, but it terminated with a disgraceful incident which I choose to relate, in order to tell the truth, and the whole truth, even when not to our advantage.

Towards evening we were directed to the right to ascend the stream of the Pregel; but at a considerable distance from it and on the heights, about one third of a mile from the position that had been our battle-field, the road we followed entered a forest. The 4th Cuirassiers, forming the head of the column, entered into it, followed by the first squadron of my regiment, and they were only just within the wood when a frightful clamour arose in it, amid which might be distinguished cries of "retire, retire," and immediately the Cuirassiers of the 4th rushed out in terrible disorder, upsetting and entangling in their flight our staff, which was leading, and our first squadron. Expecting to see them followed by a legion of Russians, I at once formed up my squadron to deaden the first shock, if nothing else, and allow the fugitives to rally. The 7th and

8th Cuirassiers also formed up at a gallop and we waited. Nothing came! It was a panic! The advanced guard had been alarmed, and throwing themselves back on the head of the column had infected it with their terror. Having restored order a little the advanced guard was questioned, and they asserted that they had seen the enemy and that the wood was full of infantry and Cossacks. Information was just being sent to the Marshals when four or five carriages were seen quietly issuing from the wood; they were our canteen men who had just come through the whole wood and not met with anything to disturb them in it at all. So we were obliged to allow that it was a ridiculous mistake.

We resumed our march, and bivouacked in some scattered farms in clearings of the forest that had no resources for us. We had to bear hunger and thirst, for the water was brackish. There was hardly any night at this time of year, and about three in the morning, on coming out of a barn where I had managed to sleep a little, I found myself in the presence of the Grand Duke of Berg on horseback, leaning forward on his horse's neck and entirely alone. He asked me if I had a

trumpeter close by, and on my answering in the affirmative, told me to desire him to sound to horse; the call was instantly repeated on all sides, and in half-an-hour we were on the march. We skirted the Pregel on the heights of the left bank, and I met there one of my friends from Normandy, Le Termellier, commanding a little post of observation of the 20th Chasseurs, my first regiment. He gave me a loaf taken out of a boat they had just seized on the river, as it was making its way upwards with the hope of delivering its cargo of bread to the Russians on the other bank.

During this march we had the first news of the battle of Friedland, which had taken place the day before, but with no other particulars than those about the retreat of the Russians. We crossed the Pregel below Wehlau; the ford was narrow, and a column of artillery was entangled in it and stopped in the midst; the opposite bank being steep, a slope had been cut in it; the ground was wet, and the march of the train was stopped by a caisson that had stuck in the mud. We had been cautioned to keep close to the carriages while passing below them; but my horse felt the loose

traces of a leader between his legs and suddenly turning to the left lost his footing. The water came up to my neck, but this would not be worth mentioning if I had not promised to record in my tale anything that can give a proper notion of a soldier's career, both physically and morally. My horse reached the other bank by swimming, and I awaited the arrival of the led horses, hoping to be able to get a change of clothes; but there was another misfortune in store for me. In passing a train of artillery in a narrow and hollow road, the horse my servant was riding fell, and the one in hand, carrying my portmanteau, got away. He could not catch it, and I never heard of it again. At that time the officers had no cloak-case on the horse they rode, so that I was left with nothing but what I wore and that wet through. In this state did I bivouac on a meadow on the bank of the Pregel, covered to the height of six feet with such a thick fog that nothing under it could be seen. As we were all the time without food, it was proposed to slaughter some wounded horses; but night came so late and day so soon, that there would



not have been time to cut them up and cook them.

We followed the Russians, foot by foot, as far as Tilsit without encountering a serious resistance at any point. Only once towards evening they seemed to wish to make head, and it astonished us that the Grand Duke of Berg, who was there, was not so enterprising as the commander of the advanced guard should be towards the rear-guard of an army in retreat. At nightfall, without being pressed, he caused us to retire two leagues to take up a position in a large village upon a hill surrounded by several streams of water. Some pigs were found there and killed, but we had no bread or potatoes, and the hot pork without anything to eat with it, had a bad effect upon stomachs that had been empty so long.

At last we arrived before Tilsit, and that was a sight I will endeavour to describe. The valley of the Niemen is commanded by a raised plateau on the side where we arrived. Tilsit was about half a league distant when we first perceived it, and we were formed up in order of battle. In their retreat to this spot the Russian army had executed converging movements, that had of course

been imitated by the different columns detailed went in pursuit of them. They were already on the opposite bank of the river, which is here of considerable size; they could easily be seen, some holding the positions assigned to them, some on the march to take up theirs. In front of Tilsit on our side, and all against the city, a corps of cavalry, composed of Cossacks, and intended to cover it, waiting till those still left in the town, should have passed the wooden bridge that was already set on fire and had the last of the foot soldiers running over it as fast as they could. This cavalry seemed destined to be sacrificed by remaining behind, and had no course to pursue but to cross the river by swimming, an exercise the Cossacks in general are well accustomed to. All our remaining cavalry was almost on the spot gathered in a mass on the height. The Emperor also was there with his staff, the mounted Chasseurs, and the Horse Grenadiers of the Guard, besides the orderly Gendarmes, a provisional body composed of young men of family mounted and equipped at their own expense.

Our division on the right received orders to march on the enemy's cavalry before Tilsit. We

began to move at a walk, in two lines of but small extent, in consequence of the losses we had experienced on the preceding days, especially the day of Heilsberg. There was something solemn in the movement we were executing. It was the last blow we were to strike, for the Russian army, quite disorganised by successive defeats, had lost nearly all its artillery, and could not keep the field any longer, and the Prussians had not ten thousand men left. The last blow was to be delivered under the eyes of the Emperor, as he could overlook the whole position, and under those of all the cavalry of the army, stationed so as not to lose the spectacle we were going to present. We understood all this; an expression of pride could be seen on the faces of our cuirassiers; and though we were all so weak, no one had any doubts of success, as all felt a moral exaltation that supplied the place and more of physical power. We advanced in silence, and had nearly covered a quarter of the distance that divided us from the Russians, when an officer issued from their ranks, passed rapidly towards our ranks with a trumpeter, and raised one of his hands, to show that he was carrying a paper. He

to the spot where the Emperor was easily to be known by his brilliant appearance, and in a few minutes an orderly officer of the Emperor's came to us at full speed bringing an order to halt. It was peace, the peace of Tilsit, that the Emperor of Russia and King of Prussia proposed. An hour later all the troops were moving in different directions to take up various cantonments assigned to them.

Since the morning we had entered upon a zone behind that occupied by the Russian and Prussian armies. It was a new country, abounding in resources, but wet and unhealthy. I was already consumed by fever, and a violent thirst that had as yet found nothing but bad water to slake it. Being suddenly at rest was far from beneficial and increased my illness; all kinds of food caused me insuperable disgust, and no assistance or medicine was in our reach. My whole regiment, as well as two companies of infantry, were quartered in the same farm; it is true it was very large, but we all slept upon straw without being able to undress. We remained there a week, and I became frightfully weak; I could not keep on my legs, and peace was concluded without my

being even able to go and enjoy the sight that there was at Tilsit, with its meeting of sovereigns and mixture of Russian, Prussian, and French uniforms. After the signature of this famous treaty, which marked the height of Napoleon's power, all the army retired, and we entered on the land of desolation we had left some weeks before. The horrors of war had never been seen under a more hideous aspect—entire villages, in all directions, depopulated by death; rotten bodies lying in the houses and streets. gardens and yards. There were nine around the house I occupied in the first cantonment where we halted. It was impossible to escape the horrible smell that they exhaled; impossible to think of burying them, as the smell would have suffocated anyone that attempted to remove them.

My illness increased; I had inflammation of the bowels that gave me not a moment's rest; our surgeon-major was an ass, and everything that he gave me produced a contrary effect to what he expected. While this was going on, General d'Avenay was appointed General of Brigade, and asked for me as his aide-de-camp. At that time there was no staff corps, and the

duties that have been imposed on it since its formation were performed by officers taken from regiments. Thus it always happened that when a colonel was promoted to be a general, he chose out of the regiment he had commanded the lieutenant or captain whom he thought most fit for the duty, of course with his consent. As for me, it had been arranged between us long before in the prospect of what had occurred.

We set out for Königsberg, where the imperial headquarters were established. General d'Avenay had always taken a travelling carriage with him, and we now made use of it. On our road we found in several places groups of wounded installed in the middle of the fields; they had been there a month without dressings or any means of subsistence but such as was irregularly furnished by the charity of some peasants. There were no French troops in these regions, as they were too completely ruined to provide the necessary subsistence. It was established by a Prussian Commission, with the Duke of Holstein as president, that the right bank of the Passarges, occupied by the Russians during the four months that had elapsed from the battle of Eylau to the re-

sumption of hostilities, presented a much greater aspect of devastation than was the case on the left bank that we had occupied. The Russians are allies who do not spare their friends.

At Königsberg our billet was on a rich Jew banker. Our rooms were tidy and we had clean linen. We stayed there a fortnight, to get our new uniforms made and buy what we wanted; then the General received orders to go and give over the command of his regiment to his successor, the Baron d'Haugeranville. We went first to Elbing, travelling the road by which I had been brought to the French advanced posts after my exchange. I had not got well at Königsberg; the fever had increased, and the General was obliged to leave me in a house that had been a portion of the cantonments we had occupied a long time before we marched against the Russians. An old lady lived in this house with a young one as her companion. They received me with alacrity, and did all they could for me. I looked as if I was dying. Two days after I was installed in this house, our surgeon-major came there, sent to look after me. He began by

giving me a drink that threw me into such convulsions that he thought I was going to die ; he told my hostesses so, and I heard him. After racking me for what seemed a very long time, the pain abated ; but from that time forward I could not take the least thing ; a spoonful of *eau sucrée*, or any kind of liquid produced vomiting and convulsions.

I was carried to Marienwerder, and placed under the charge of a surgeon of the 4th Cuirassiers, named Fouillette ; and Jouette, my orderly when I was a sub-lieutenant, having requested to be allowed to nurse me, he was sent there. These two men saved my life ; the first by attacking the sickness in the proper manner, the second by watching over me night and day with the solicitude of a mother. At last I became convalescent, and when I could eat, Lieutenant-General Espagne, who commanded the division I had belonged to, sent me every day some dishes made up according to the prescriptions of my doctor, and this regime was continued for a long time and cured me.

General d'Avenay had received orders to take the command of the second brigade of the Fourth



Division of Dragoons, commanded by General La Houssaye; but he waited till I should be in a condition to travel before going to take up his new duty. We arrived at the château of Fürstenberg, where was the staff of the 19th Regiment of Dragoons, composing with the 18th, our brigade. This was a castle of the middle ages, and beneath it was a pretty lake. The owner, a bachelor of about forty, seemed an excellent man and of refined manners. The colonel of the 19th Dragoons kept on vexing him from morning to night, for the pleasure of playing the despot and conqueror. This colonel, with his splendid and martial aspect, when the enemy appeared did not justify his looks; and yet he died a lieutenant-general, but leaving a very bad reputation. He had no education, but this justice must be done him, he had the art to manage his regiment quite satisfactorily, as it was in capital condition. The other regiment of our brigade, the 18th Dragoons, was also excellent; it was commanded by Colonel Lafitte, well known to have all the qualities deficient in his comrade. Of tried courage, he was modest and kind; as soon as we knew one another a little intimately he showed

that he liked me. He died rather young, a major-general.

We did not remain long at Fürstenberg; it was there that I found the one armed miller who had received me so badly when a prisoner. I inquired for his daughter, not from him but from the people of the chateau, when I heard that she was no longer at the mill. On leaving Fürstenberg, we took up our quarters near Soldau. The country had suffered much; but as we found ourselves on the left bank of the Passarges, and consequently outside the line occupied by the Russians before the resumption of hostilities, there had been no devastation. We were lodged in a house belonging to the Baron de Collas, who was there with his wife, his son, and two daughters. The son, a dragoon officer, had been made prisoner at the beginning of the campaign, and released on parole. The family were really very original, and we were much amused at this domestic life of a remarkable kind. Every evening all carried their beds into the garden to escape the heat, and placed themselves a very little way apart. General d'Avenay had a notion of giving a ball. Mademoiselle Sophie de Collas came and

confided to him that she had no dress elegant enough to enable her to be present at this entertainment; and the General at once offered to give her one, which she accepted with delight. Then I permitted myself to present her with a pair of slippers of white satin embroidered with pearls, and a tooth-brush, telling her the use she was to make of the latter. Baron de Collas's mansion was very large, modern, and built in French style. Before we came there we had stayed for some weeks in another mansion at Ludwigdorff, with a charming family, composed of the mother, three daughters, and a governess, all speaking French perfectly.

Towards the month of November we received orders to recross the Vistula; we dreamed of France and thought we were going to enter it; but the very evening before we were to cross the river, after marching towards it for several days, we received orders to retrace our steps, and to use hostile measures towards the remnants of the Prussian army, who were following us to resume occupation of the territory that we were leaving, unless they retreated before us. We only found great consternation and passive obedience in reply

to the summons we were to our great regret obliged to make. This offensive movement seemed to us to presage a rupture of the peace, and imagination worked upon this theme till we saw ourselves again parted from France for a long time. As to the rupture of the peace we were in error, and it was only a question of war contributions that had caused the demonstration that we had been ordered to make. We resumed our cantonments near Soldau, and stayed with Baron de Collas up to the middle of December, at which time we really passed the Vistula on our way to Silesia, the route appointed for our division. When we left our cantonments the peasants displayed real sorrow at parting with our soldiers, and accompanied them till they joined the body of the regiment, giving them all sorts of marks of affection. General d'Avenay had received orders to bring with him as much live stock as he could, but he caused the inhabitants to be warned, so that they might conceal their cattle in the woods, and he reported that he had found nothing, and this brought a good many blessings upon him.

We crossed the Vistula at Thorn, and leaving

Warsaw on the right, we marched on Kalisch to proceed to Breslau by the main road, and thence to the cantonments appointed for us. Those of General d'Avenay's brigade were extended from Landshut, on the Bohemian frontier, to Janre and Strigau, in a beautiful country rich in resources of all kinds. I was lodged with the General in the Chateau of Rohnstock, one of the princely dwellings of Count de Hochberg, the richest proprietor in Silesia. He lived at Rohnstock with his wife, a princess of Anhalt Pless, and three children, the eldest five years old, and the younger, twins still in the cradle. The Countess was thirty-six, and her first child had been born fourteen years after her marriage. She was a clever woman, and good beyond all expression. The Count was a capital man; his character was gay, frank, and of such an equable temper that I never saw it give way. There I also knew the Baroness Richthoffen, born Princess of Holstein, and so of the royal house of Denmark; she was twenty-four, and had just lost her husband, and Count Hochberg had invited her and her four children to spend her time of mourning at his house. This happy family was to us like a bit of

home. All the time that we stayed at Rohnstock we received numerous of proofs of the most sincere and vivid sympathy, and at the moment I write this I am still in correspondence with the Baroness Richthoffen. The eldest of her daughters, Louise, married General de Natzmer, aide-de-camp to the King of Prussia; in 1816 the Count de Natzmer commanded the corps of the Prussian army that invaded France with the other European armies. The second, Agnes, married the Count de Lutichau; the third, Iris, is unmarried, and little Baron Fritz is now the father of two sons who are in the army.\*

In the course of the year 1808 the events that brought on the occupation of Spain by a portion of the forces of France had taken their course. The revolt of Madrid and the battle of Baylen had taken place. There was also talk of

\* This was written in 1857, and in 1872, sixty-four years after the time at which M. de Gonneville had known the Princess of Holstein, Baroness Richthoffen, the Countess de Lutichau, her daughter, came to France on purpose to see him, after having sent him, in 1858, her eldest son, the Count Max de Lutichau, Chamberlain to Her Majesty the Queen Dowager of Prussia, and afterwards her second son and nephew Baron Oldwig de Richthoffen.

a fresh campaign against Austria; but that power had not recovered the exhaustion of its former war, and being pressed on all sides by the French army gave way on all the points in question. Our division, as well as several bodies of return troops, received orders to march to Spain, and we quitted Silesia, where we had received so many marks of affection, where we left real friends, where we had lived in luxury and abundance, to proceed to a country that was depicted to us in the darkest colours, where war had become a contest for existence, where assassination and poisoning were publicly inculcated from the pulpit as legitimate methods ordained by God for the extermination everything bearing a French name, without distinction of sex or age.

We had to cross a great piece of Germany and all France, beginning from Mayence, which was then a part of it, to Bayonne. We were royally treated in all Saxony; our reception was beyond imagination; it was no doubt by order, but there was nothing official about it. At Frahkfort we were informed that the Emperor being at Mayence would review us next day in front of Cassel, and General d'Avenay's brigade could show sixteen

magnificent squadrons in line of battle. The horses were in capital condition, though they had made such a long march. The ten months spent in Silesia had been employed in placing all the resources of the cantons we occupied, as far as was legally possible, at the disposal of our two regiments, and they had been sharp enough to profit by it. By way of showing their respect for the General, they had offered me a horse fully equipped, a present that I had been obliged to accept, and which had gratified me much. It was a charming Mecklenburg mare, very good, and very well drilled.

The Emperor arrived, escorted by all the Princes of the Confederation and a crowd of generals. He had reviewed the first brigade of our division on the left bank of the Rhine, and had not been pleased with it, especially with the 27th Regiment under the command of Colonel Lallemand. The sight of our sixteen squadrons, so full of force and power, seemed to surprise him; his face expressed satisfaction and good humour. He was on foot, as usual with him on these sort of occasions, having General d'Avenay with him and talking to him, followed by all his suite. All at



once the General left the Emperor, rushed to me, tore me from my horse rather than let me dismount, dragged me to the Emperor and presented me to him with an emotion I shall never forget, asking for the rank of captain for me. The Emperor remained a moment with his eyes fixed upon me, then he turned to the Prince of Neufchatel, chief of the staff of the army, who followed him with a note book in his hand, he told him :

“Mark M. de Gonneville as captain.”

I think that no music ever sounded so pleasant in my ear. I was not twenty-five years old yet, and hardly four years had passed since I had been in the ranks as a private soldier. I gave my name to the Prince de Neufchatel, and he wrote it down in his note book, giving me a gracious bow and saying :

“Sir, you are a captain.”

I was really from that very day borne on the state of staff officers as of that rank and received the appointments. General La Houssaye, commanding our division, a quarter-of-an-hour before had begged for captain's rank for his aide-de-camp Millet, a much older lieutenant than I was,

and had received a flat refusal. The day was one of the fairest of my life, and all at once I thought of the pleasure that my father, my mother, and my brother would feel when they heard of this my unexpected promotion, such as I had never dreamed of. I had gone away a sub-lieutenant, and it was with the rank of captain and the Cross of the Legion of Honour that I should again come under my father's roof. For when we had placed our regiments beyond the Rhine we were to take post and go to Normandy spend a fortnight there, and rejoin our brigade near Bordeaux.

Another incident took place at the Emperor's review. General d'Avenay required a second aide-de-camp. He asked me to help him to choose, and I named to him Saint Victor, a sub-lieutenant in the 19th Regiment of Dragoons, when I had ascertained from himself that he would like the post. The General made the request and it was granted at once, and gave Saint Victor the rank of lieutenant. He was of a good family in Dauphiné; he was clever and had great natural talent. The General was but little acquainted with him, but soon knew how to

value him, and we always had to congratulate ourselves on the cordiality that existed between us. He became a colonel, was second in command at the School at Saumur, then had the 5th Regiment of Mounted Chasseurs; they were sent to Africa, but he had fallen into bad health and had retired. His second marriage was with a niece of his own; much younger than himself, and she made him the father of a numerous family. This digression is foreign to my military history; but I shall at times have to mention persons whose memory remains dear to me.

When we had spent a fortnight in Normandy, we joined our division at Ruffec, between Poitiers and Bordeaux, the same day that the Emperor went by there on his way from Erfurth. We waited for him at the post-house, and while changing horses he questioned General d'Avenay respecting the amount of fatigue of men and horses who had just made a march of four hundred leagues. He appeared satisfied with the account given. While we were there an infantry colonel, in a uniform of a former period, drew near the carriage door, for the Emperor had not dismounted, and in an agitated voice begged to be

allowed the honour of going to Spain to share the honours and dangers of the army. The Emperor answered :

“And if I give you employment, will you be wrong-headed again?”

The poor colonel lost his head in a moment, being quite embarrassed by this question, and he stammered out :

“Sire, I will do everything that is in my power to serve as *agreeably* as possible.”

“If that is the case,” said the Emperor, with a smile, “come to me at Bayonne.”

He went there, was appointed to a regiment, and three years afterwards was General of Division. I have forgotten his name. He had been turned out of the army because he had written the word *No* on the voting lists opened for the acceptance of the Empire by the French nation. We learnt this that evening at Ruffec at a party that we had been invited to join.

We marched to Bayonne without halting and rested there. We found Eugène d’Hautefeuille there, one of the companions of my youth. He had spent all his property and separated from his

wife, and then by the interest of his name obtained a sub-lieutenancy in the 5th Regiment of Dragoons, and was going to join it in Spain. The General was also acquainted with d'Hautefeuille, and permitted him to march with us, and thenceforward he became our messmate. This was of great service to him, for, with his inexperience of military matters, and in an enemy's country up in arms like Spain, I do not know how he would have managed. Certainly he had no want of intelligence and assurance, but physical obstacles would have risen before him at every step; for there is no more miserable plight than that of an isolated soldier marching with an army in an invaded country, where there is in consequence no regular authority established, and lodging and food are questions every moment of difficult solution. Eugène d'Hautefeuille was the third son of the Marquis d'Hautefeuille, a lieutenant-general before the revolution, and holding an elevated rank in Normandy, more from his position than his character. Eugène had plenty of ability and imagination, but a vanity that induced him to revolt against anything that might display any superiority to him of any kind,

and to himself, he never allowed that he was excelled. This disposition had made him cast himself recklessly into science, art, and exercises of all kinds, and the result was that, having attempted everything, he had only skimmed it all, except fencing, in which he had gone pretty far. He was possessed of remarkable muscular power, though slender and weak in appearance; and the desire of exhibiting this advantage had forced him into immoderate enterprises that had greatly shaken his constitution. Otherwise he was amiable, of a joyous temper, and sometimes quite charming. General Laroche said to him one day before a battle :

“Take care of yourself, for if your wife were a widow I would marry her.”

He answered, “I should be very glad, General, if it could be managed without my being killed!”

## CHAPTER V.

ENTRY INTO SPAIN—BATTLE OF BURGOS—CRUELITIES OF THE SPANIARDS—PASSAGE OF SOMO SIERRA—THE EMPEROR—COLONEL DE PIRÉ—THE POLISH LANCERS—M. DE SEGUR—GENERAL LA HOUSSEY—MADRID—THE ESCURIAL—THE MONKS—PASSAGE OF THE GUADARRAMA—THE EMPEROR AND THE DIVISION LAPISSE—THE EMPEROR AND THE MONKS OF CASTILE—THE ENGLISH IN RETREAT—GENERAL LEFEBVRE-DESNOUETTES—THE CHASSEURS OF THE GUARD AND THE MAMLUKES—BENAVENTE—PASSAGE OF THE HELZA—TAKING OF TORO—COLONEL VAN HOUSE—BATTERY OF THE GUARD RECAPTURED BY GENERAL D'AVENAY—SIX DANGEROUS JOURNEYS—MISSIONS TO VALLADOLID—THE PRINCE OF NEUFCHATEL AND THE IMPERIAL QUARTERS—PENILLA BUENT—MARSHAL BESSIÈRES—TORDESILLAS—THE POSTILION MANUEL CONDEMNED TO BE HANGED—GENERAL D'AVENAY IN COMMAND OF THREE PROVINCES—ENGLISH AND PORTUGUESE—ZAMORA—THE BALL—FALSE ALARM—ASSASSINATIONS, PUNISHMENTS, CRUELITIES—FANATICISM OF THE SPANIARDS—ADRIEN DE VILLAUNAY—GENERAL KELLERMANN—DEPARTURE FOR ITALY.

WE made our entrance into Spain. Nothing looks more gloomy or sad than Irun, the first town entered a quarter-of-a-league

from the frontier; the houses of dark coloured granite, windows barred up to the third story, the streets narrow and dirty, such was Irun. The head-quarters of our division stopped there, the regiments were crammed into it or in bivouac around. We saw hateful countenances all round, but our march passed without incident quite to the neighbourhood of Burgos. There was a sort of shadow of resistance, that was honoured with the name of the battle of Burgos; it was on the 10th of November, 1808, Marshal Soult was in command, and the Emperor still at Bayonne. The defeat of the Spaniards was so speedy that it was all over when our division came up, and we entered Burgos the same day. Almost all the inhabitants had fled, and as we took our lodgings in military fashion, that is to say, as we could, and without billets from the local authorities, who had disappeared, the result was a detestable waste that destroyed the greatest part of the resources that might have been obtained in the city, and exasperated the inhabitants in the highest degree. Assassinations multiplied, and it was not safe to leave the assemblage of the troops. This war now assumed a character



of reciprocal animosity, which took its origin from the events that happened in Madrid in the previous month of May; animosity that kept on increasing and was a presage of atrocities quite beyond any before committed. These presages were realised, and the traditional tortures of the Inquisition were often put in practice upon the wretched Frenchmen who fell into the hands of their pitiless adversaries; they were crucified and sawn in two between planks. We saw a dragoon officer nailed against a door, having between his teeth the proof of the previous mutilation he had been subjected to. A few leagues beyond Burgos we found on the road a civilian cantineer and a child of twelve with their throats cut; they were *artistically* disposed to display the barbarity that accompanied the act, and similar examples were repeated every moment.

The passage of the Ebro was not disputed, and we arrived at the foot of Somo Sierra on the 30th of November. It seemed a difficult obstacle to pass; the mountain chain shows pointed rocks at a great height; the road ascends by zigzags in a narrow gorge, and is cut by a torrent every moment; this was now quite dry, but all the

bridges had been cut. This road was the only possible approach to this position, considered impregnable by the Spaniards. They had crowded it with batteries at successive elevations commanding all the portions of the road that could be traversed; clouds of skirmishers lay in wait to right and left of the ravine, and masses of infantry covered the accessible spots of the heights. As soon as an advance along the road was attempted, the fire of guns and musketry commenced, then there was a profound silence as soon as a movement in retreat had placed the assailants in shelter.

The Emperor was at the foot of the mountain at the entrance of the gorge; a hundred paces further and he would have been under the fire of the first battery, which was covered by an *épaule-ment* and flanked by sharp-shooters, and had two of the broken bridges I have mentioned before it. The Emperor ordered bridges of planks and beams to be immediately thrown across these cuts. The sappers performed the duty, but with heavy loss. Then he ordered Colonel Piré, aide-de-camp to the Prince of Neufchâtel, to go and reconnoitre if there was any possibility of flinging a charge

of cavalry upon the first battery. Piré went off at a gallop, was received by musketry, and returned with a rather too much scared appearance telling him aloud that it was impossible. The speech and manner of saying it put the Emperor in such a rage that he struck at M. de Piré with his whip, and the blow was only escaped by a quick movement in retreat.

There were no troops on the spot but the Chasseurs of the Guard, the Polish Lancers of the Guard, two regiments of infantry, one or two of the batteries of the Guard, and our division. The Emperor ordered the Chasseurs of the Guard to charge the first battery. They went off at a gallop in column of fours with their usual determination; but the moment they were unmasked by turning the flank of the mountain that covered us, the gun and musketry fire recommenced with such violence that they retired in great disorder, thus confirming Colonel Piré's information. Then the colonel of the Polish Lancers came to the Emperor and applied to him for permission to attempt a charge; this was granted, and in a few minutes the battery was carried, but with sensible loss. M. de Ségur, who had joined the charge as

an amateur, fell pierced with five balls; the neighbourhood of the battery was strewn with horses and lancers. There was one horse with his fore-quarters within the battery, while his hind legs hung without; his rider was stretched dead in the middle of the battery.

We received orders to support the movement of the Poles, and to take the head of the column as soon as it had dislodged the enemy from the heights. By one of those chances that occur in war sometimes through strokes of audacity, three other batteries better placed than the first to dispute the pass, had been abandoned by their defenders on seeing the success of the Poles. The guns remained there unfired, and not a single musket shot was sent at us while crossing the mountain, though at least an hour's work.

After issuing from the gorge, at a distance of a mile we found Buitrago, a nasty, dirty little town. We reached it at night; our first brigade remained there with the guard and the general headquarters. We received orders to continue our march for two hours cautiously, because we had an enemy before us; but in what direction was not known.

Madrid was our aim, not more than two days' march distant. The night was beautiful, and the light of the moon was almost as bright as day. We arrived at a large village deserted by the inhabitants, and found supplies of all kinds there; the two regiments made their bivouac in front with the requisite precautions, and the General established himself in the best looking house. Fowls were killed, our cook set to work, and in a couple of hours we had plenty of opportunity of satiating an appetite sharpened by having fasted the whole day.

We were just beginning to do honour to the repast when General La Houssaye, whom we had left at Buitrago with the first brigade, came up with his three aides-de-camp and the whole staff of the division. General d'Avenay received them all with perfect grace, had every possible addition made to the meal, and the new comers seemed delighted to have nothing to do but to sit down to table on their arrival. After supper General d'Avenay offered a share of his room to General La Houssaye, while the aides-de-camp settled themselves in a neighbouring room. It was nothing but just lying down on mattresses on

the floor, as, holding the position of extreme advanced guard, we could not even take off our boots. The chief of the staff and his officers went to find other lodgings, for the house we occupied was much too small to accommodate every one. On hearing General d'Avenay's proposal General La Houssaye burst into a rage, and told him that he had been neglectful in not offering him the exclusive possession of the house as soon as he arrived, as was his due, since it was the best in the place. General d'Avenay replied that however unsuitable the claim might have seemed to him before supper, he would however at that time have allowed it, but that having performed the duties of hospitality in that house, he considered himself at home in it and would not go. Both were pretty warm, and at last General d'Avenay, driven to extremity, told the other he might go and walk about, and added that if he was not contented there was plenty of moonlight for them to go down into the courtyard that moment and settle their difference. This proposition quieted General La Houssaye immediately, and he answered, reasonably enough this time, that at the advanced posts, even put-

ting aside his superior rank, they would both of them be acting essentially in contravention of their duty by concluding their dispute in such a manner. At the same time he held out his hand to General d'Avenay, who took it, and we went to rest. But we aides-de-camp were no sooner alone together than those of General La Houssaye allowed their indignation against him to break forth, and they told us :

“Do not let your General trust him. He makes semblance of wishing to forget this scene altogether, but he would remember it a hundred years if he were to live so long. He was afraid, like a coward as he is” (it was quite true that he was a coward), “and he will never forgive your General.”

A few days afterwards we had a proof that the aides-de-camp were not mistaken.

In two days we were at Madrid, on an elevation commanding the city at a distance of half a league in the direction of our advance. All the bells, and heaven knows how many there were, sounded the tocsin; guns fired ceaselessly, and there was musketry at the gate of Alcala and the two openings at its right and left. The Emperor's

tent was pitched on the left of the road where it begins to go down hill. I saw him surrounded by a ring of sentries, walking about with his arms crossed on his breast, and seeming lost in deep thought. It was during a halt that we made on the height that we could see him in this attitude, and it continued all the time we remained there.

Our brigade received orders to turn Madrid by the right, and attack any reinforcements that might make their appearance coming by the roads that opened on the left bank of the Manzanares. We executed this movement without any further opposition than was caused by park walls and palings that had to be removed by the sappers; these parks were full of stags, deer, and roes, which seemed quite tame as they came up, just as if they were curious to look at us going by. A large body of Spanish cavalry, coming by the road from Aranjuez, retired the moment they saw us in the distance, and we saw bands of armed peasants, who had come to defend the city, now flying in all directions. We had been joined by Colonel de Piré, and he told us that the Emperor had just given him orders to go round



Madrid alone. This was probably on purpose to have him killed. It would have been a kind of miracle if he had accomplished his mission without hindrance ; for, notwithstanding the movement in retreat that we had caused, there was considerable excitement *extra muros* among the Spaniards on the side where we were, the opposite one to the attack ; so that it was an impossibility for a man alone to pass the Manzanares to the east of Madrid without falling either by their blows or into their hands, which would have come to the same thing.

About three in the afternoon we got orders to march upon the Escorial, to halt at the fork of the roads leading there and to the Guadarrama, to send out a strong reconnaissance in the latter direction, to ascertain what had become of the force that was marching on Madrid by Valladolid and Segovia, and if we met the advanced guard of this force, immediately to go and occupy the Escorial. After halting two hours, we saw our reconnaissance returning, they had met the 5th Regiment of Dragoons, forming the extreme advanced guard of the body we desired to hear of. Then we marched on the Escorial ; but during our

halt an incident took place that deserves mention as a proof of the fanaticism of the Spaniards. The plateau we occupied is covered with pyramidal stones of a height of from seven to nine yards; almost all of these pyramids are crowned by a stone placed there by the hand of man. At a distance of twenty-five paces a shot was fired upon us, but the ball passed high above our heads. The sappers of the 18th Dragoons hastened to the point the shot came from, and found behind one of the stones an old man in such a state of prostration from terror that not a word could be got out of him; he was trembling all over, and had to be held up or he would have fallen to the ground. The poor wretch had stirred himself up to deserve martyrdom by killing one of us, and when he tried to accomplish his intention he did so without having any notion of the direction of his shot, for the ball passed more than five-and-twenty feet over our heads, while if he had aimed at the group of a dozen officers composing the staff, he would have been sure of one victim at least. They brought him to us and made him sit on the side of the road, where it overhung a ravine too dark for the bottom to be visible.

After a time no more attention was paid to this man, and he all at once jumped up and cast himself into the chasm. No one risked going after him; but when I afterwards had an opportunity of examining the spot by daylight, I came to the conclusion that with his knowledge of the spot, our prisoner might have escaped without much danger. The relation of this circumstance, among many others of the same kind, may give a still imperfect notion what feelings of hatred towards us the Spaniards had religiously taken up.

As I have said, we marched upon the Escorial, entering the park with caution, as we had no infantry with us. From the entrance on this side there is a distance of a league to the lower town, and there we were received with some musket-shots, to which our skirmishers replied: while in less than an hour both defenders and inhabitants had disappeared.

It was still night. The lower town is separated from the upper by an escarpment, occupied by the terraced gardens of the palace, and a magnificent slope as a means of communication. At its foot we waited for day, to

allow us to reconnoitre—a long time at this season.

At first break of day our reconnoiterers advanced, and had to exchange a few shots. There was firing from the windows of the convent—an actual fortress, an immense mass of stone, and like no other building in the world. We began to parley with the monks; and at last, about mid-day, they opened their gates. There were only five monks left in the convent, the youngest of them seeming a hundred years old, and some serving brothers. All the rest had escaped by the caverns, which were said to issue at a distance of more than a league among the mountains, amid rocks of great height that command the convent and higher town on the west.

We found all the French milliners and cooks of Madrid shut up in the convent: they had been sent there for protection from the fury of the populace of Madrid—the worst populace in the world; and as the Governor of the Escorial was not a bit more able to confide in the disposition of his own people, he had placed our fellow-countrymen in prison, till

we delivered them and were called their liberators.

I went over the royal apartments and the convent; the first is in no way remarkable; it would take months to see the latter properly.

The same day we were joined by General La Houssaye and the second brigade of our division. General La Houssaye held out his hand to General d'Avenay, who gave him his very willingly; so everything seemed to be put to rights; but next day General d'Avenay received orders to proceed to the Imperial head-quarters, to receive another appointment and to give over the command of his brigade to General de Caulincourt. Suspecting that this originated with General La Houssaye, who had the reputation of not being straightforward, General d'Avenay hastened to him, accompanied by me. General La Houssaye defended himself vigorously, and swore that he had nothing to do with the measure, declaring it was quite contrary to his wishes. While upon this, he made very fine protestations of friendship.

We departed for Madrid, and remained there a fortnight, when General d'Avenay, who had been excellently received by the Prince of Neufchâtel, Major-General of the Army, received the command of a detached brigade, composed of the third regiment of Dutch hussars and five squadrons of dragoons of different regiments.

The English army had landed at Corunna, under the orders of General Hill, and was advancing on Madrid, menacing our communications with France, and giving a moral support to the Spanish insurgents, in addition to that derived from a profusion of arms and ammunition being placed at their service. The Emperor having rushed in pursuit of this army with his Guard and the corps of Marshal Ney, we received orders to protect the flank of this column at the distance of two or three leagues; and to halt every evening, as well as possible, opposite the Imperial head-quarters, sending thither every morning for orders for the operations of the day.

The English army commenced their retreat as soon as we marched against it. We passed

the mountains of Guadarrama in a frightful hurricane; the snow was driven by whirlwinds and fell with extreme violence, enveloping and covering us with a thick coating that made its way through our cloaks. Several men perished during the passage; it lasted a whole day, and there was incredible difficulty in taking the artillery over.

While we were climbing the Guadarrama with such difficulty, we were on the flank of the infantry division commanded by General Lapisse, and a few steps in rear of the Emperor, who was marching on foot, like ourselves; for no precaution had been taken in shoeing, and the horses fell every moment. The soldiers of Lapisse's division gave loud expression to the most sinister designs against the Emperor's person, stirring up each other to fire a shot at him, and bandying accusations of cowardice for not doing it. He heard it all as plainly as we did, and seemed as if he did not care a bit for it; but when he reached the highest point of the ridge, where a colossal lion marks the boundary of the two Castiles, he stopped, sent for General Lapisse, and told him to proceed to the right to

the mountains' foot, and go and take up his quarters with his division in the villages he would find there, and which would afford him supplies.

Next day I was sent very early to the Imperial head-quarters, to receive the orders for the day's march from the Prince of Neufchâtel, as had been directed. I had to wait on the ground floor of a little house where the Emperor and the Prince had spent the night. I found myself there in company with some generals and officers, besides five fat monks, who had probably come on a deputation, for their faces expressed the greatest anxiety. After waiting half-an-hour, I saw the Emperor issue from a little staircase that led into the room where we were. On the commotion that his presence excited, the monks, seeing who he was, flung themselves at his feet, murmuring some words I did not understand. The Emperor seemed in very good humour—raised them and tapped them on the shoulder with a smile, telling his interpreter to inform them that they might reckon upon his protection, and desiring them to prevail on the inhabitants to remain quiet and



not intermeddle with the fighting, for their own good. This advice was repeated at all points in Spain without being productive of any good

The Emperor's horse had just been brought, but seeing the thick coating of hoar frost covering the ground, he said he would walk on foot to the place where the plain became more pronounced and there seemed to be no more rime. The Prince of Neuchâtel gave me a sign to attend them; and I soon found myself alone with the Emperor, the Prince of Neuchâtel and General de Montholon, as the difficulties arising from the hoar frost and the crowd of horses had delayed the escort and the mass of the general staff at a pretty good distance. In a quarter of an hour the Emperor turned, and, seeing me, cast an inquiring look on the Prince of Neuchâtel, which I could easily interpret. The Prince had probably forgotten me, and then he gave me the orders I had come for; adding, "Tell General d'Avenay that the Emperor requires the maintenance of the most rigid discipline, and that no sort of pillage is to be tolerated." The

Emperor nodded his head, as much as to say, "Yes, that is my intention."

I turned back to meet the two hussars that came with me and had charge of my horse; and in crossing the space between us was witness to a fact that deserves to be related. At a short distance from the spot where I had left the Emperor, there was an infantry division that must have been at least eight thousand strong, posted on the right of the road, in column, by regiments. I turned sharply at the unanimous acclamations with which this body saluted the Emperor on his appearance at the point they occupied. Enthusiasm was at its height! It was Lapisse's division! the same that the evening before in crossing the Guadarrama had used the seditious language I have mentioned. In the villages where they spent the night, they had found food and wine—and this was the explanation of this sudden change, as the Emperor doubtless had foreseen.

We were soon upon the heels of the English, who had begun to retreat as soon as they were certainly informed that we were marching against

them. We crossed the Douro at Tordesillas, and marched upon Benavente. The rain fell without interruption for several days; the roads were broken up; and yet the English left neither gun nor carriage behind them. All the horses were killed that were too much worn out to march, and the men who rode them were obliged to bring in the foot that had the number of the horse and regiment marked on it, as was then the English custom.

The Esla, a pretty considerable river coming down from the Asturias, falls into the Douro; Benavente is on the right bank, at the distance of a mile and a half. We arrived on the left bank. The Emperor, annoyed at seeing no prisoners, was making complaints of the want of energy of the pursuit, so much that General Lefebvre Desnouettes, commander of the Chasseurs of the Guard, when he reached the bank of the river, swam across, though it was excessively swollen by the rains, with his Chasseurs and Mamelukes, and charged the English cavalry that was on the opposite bank; they retired on Benavente at a gallop, drawing the Chasseurs and Mamelukes

after them. When they reached the walls of Benavente they came to the right about, and with the support of several squadrons charged in their turn. The troop of select men whom they met supported the shock splendidly; but while contending against forces already superior in number, four regiments of English cavalry, favoured by the accidents of the ground, turned their left and came upon their rear, cutting off any means of retreat.\* In order to escape, they flung themselves headlong upon these new enemies, while still pursued with all vigour by the first. The whole mass reached the banks of the Esla mingled in a terrible conflict, when the survivors that remained threw themselves in independently. Many were drowned, and hardly a third of the Chasseurs and Mame-

\* Napier, in his "Peninsular War," Vol. I., p. 467, states that the pickets and a part of the 3rd German Hussars only were engaged at first against six hundred French, and disputed the ground so firmly as to allow of the retreat of the baggage and camp followers, and that one regiment only, the 10th Hussars, was brought up by Lord Paget to repulse the French.—*Note by Trans.*

lukes that had crossed the river regained the left bank. This occurred on the 31st of December, 1808.\*

The rain had ceased and was succeeded by intense frost. The same day at evening, just at nightfall, we received orders to cross the Esla opposite to Benavente, and to take the orders of Marshal Bessières for the crossing, so I was sent to him. I found him on the bank of the river, with two pieces of cannon which he ordered to be laid for something that seemed to him to be a troop in line on the other side. One of the pieces was fired, and as no movement could be seen to show that they had fired upon anything living, nothing more was done. The Marshal gave me orders for the brigade to retire to a large village we had passed, and to wait there. In it we found several of the wounded

\* Napier gives the number of French engaged at six hundred; the English loss was fifty killed and wounded, the French left fifty-five killed and wounded on the field and seventy prisoners; and Baron Larrey says seventy more wounded escaped. Lefebvre-Desnouettes was taken prisoner, and became notorious for having broken his parole and escaped to France, a proceeding justified by the Emperor.—*Note by Trans.*

of the day, and heard from them the particulars related above. They told us that the English did not fire on the Chasseurs and Mamelukes who escaped by swimming; and that they even had drawn several out of the water just as they were going to be drowned.

We were prostrate with weariness and hunger. We found sustenance for ourselves and our horses and capital mattresses to lie on; but we had hardly been an hour in a deep sleep when an officer of the general staff brought us an order to resume our march instantly, cross the Esla, and advance on Benavente. He told us that there was a ford that would be shown us when we reached the place where I had found Marshal Bessières. We reached the spot, and found no one waiting to give us the promised information. Saint-Victor and I entered the water to try the depth; and the dread of finding ourselves below the ford and being carried away by the current without being able to touch the bottom, caused us to bear as much as we could against the rapid stream. The opposite bank of the large river could only just

be seen, and it seemed very high and steep. Saint-Victor's horse lost footing and was carried away so quickly that I lost sight of him and his rider in a few seconds. That very moment my turn came, and I felt a cruel anxiety—not on account of the imminence of danger, as I knew from experience that I could count on my horse—but in thinking of Saint-Victor and of the struggle that must occur between my horse and myself if he did not find footing at the base of the steep bank, that seemed higher and higher as we neared it. Happily, though the water washed the base of the steep, we touched bottom more than twenty paces from it. At last I met with Saint-Victor; he had landed lower down than I did, and by a spontaneous movement we embraced each other. But we were alone on this river that had received us so inhospitably, and had to consider the means of getting over the brigade which still remained on the other side. The English had left the bank on which we were. We shouted in vain, doing all we could to say that the bank was accessible; the size of the river, and the noise it made, would not allow our voices to be clearly audible, and we only

got inarticulate sounds in reply. It seemed absolutely necessary for one of us to recross, and this had to be myself, for Saint-Victor was already suffering from an illness that soon attacked him with great severity.

I found the General very uncertain what he was to do; he disliked the water, and justly, considering that out of the nine hundred horses composing his brigade there would probably be some bad swimmers that would bear their riders to certain destruction. However, as the crossing had to be done, the column entered the river, led by a section of dragoons that were sent in front. But when they came to the spot where *the horses lost footing, and were carried off* and out of sight in the darkness, the General became alarmed for the consequences that might ensue for the rest of his force were they thus carried down, and he stopped. As my two former passages had hardened me against this kind of danger, I wished to show him that it was not so bad as he thought, and with that purpose I went on again, and succeeded as happily as on the first occasion. Meanwhile, the General had held to the left, following the stream, and advanced as he



found the bottom rise. At last he found the ford, and crossed with the whole column without losing a single man, and without the riders even getting water into their boots. As for Saint-Victor and me, we were as wet as one is when a horse swims, that is to say, to the shoulders, and so up to the throat, because the portion of our clothes that had not been under water had imbibed the wet from the lower portions. I have said that it was freezing, and we marched at a walk till day, which is long in coming on the first of January. At Benavente we found the infantry division, that had crossed on a bridge of boats, and left it there. I would have given a great deal to be able to warm myself a little at the bivouac fires that were lighted in the streets, but we had to march. It was really a cruel night ! At last day broke ; we stopped to rest and feed our horses, and I was able to dry myself. When we got near Astorga, where the Imperial head-quarters had just arrived, we learnt that General Lefebvre-Desnouettes had been made prisoner the day before.

Our brigade was encamped in a village situated near a brook. and we sent our horses down to it by

small detachments, when all at once the English cavalry came to do the same on their side. Two-thirds of the horses were in their watering bridles and the men without arms, so that, after looking one another in the face, both went to the right about and set off at a gallop to report the unexpected meeting that had just taken place. The result to us was an immediate reconnaissance in the direction we had seen the English take, and for them an acceleration of their movement in retreat. This incident showed us that when we halted all military precautions for our protection from an unexpected attack had not been taken, and that if, instead of a small unarmed detachment, the corps it belonged to had made an offensive movement against us, we should have been taken by surprise.

When they came to tell me, I was shaving a beard of fully a week's growth. And before undertaking this operation I had been presiding at the distribution among the officers of forty-three turkeys, which we had found in the house we occupied, all plucked and trussed ready for roasting. This grand treasure-trove was the

store of a brother caterer of a convent who had made this provision for the monks to have a proper feast on the approaching feast day of the Three Kings.\* He told us this himself with several groans, when he saw how generously we dispensed his treasures, but as may be well imagined we kept our own share. They had for a long time managed to avoid opening the door of the room, but when it was done at last, what a splendid sight for hungry men appeared before our eyes! Forty-three white and plump turkeys with pendent necks and breasts upwards, ranged on the benches around the room. I see them now.

Next night we heard that the Emperor was returning in all haste to Valladolid, and that in all probability Austria was going to declare war against us. At the same time as this information came, we received orders to retire and to march on Toro, a town situated on the Douro that had not yet submitted, with the country which it commands. Coming from Madrid to Astorga, we had left the provinces of Toro and Zamora to our left; no French troops had been

\* The Epiphany.

directed on that quarter, but it was probable that in occupying Toro we should not have any resistance to overcome, as the movement of the army and the retreat of the English had made the inhabitants understand that submission was the wisest course, indeed the only one to take.

It took us two days to reach Toro; we recrossed the Esla a good three leagues below the place where we had passed the first time. It was written that the river was to be a mine of adventures for me. After crossing it, I remained upon the bank to see the column pass, and this was done without accident. But at the moment when the led horses in the rear were making their way across, the mule bearing our provisions and the General's cook was carried away by the stream. The poor cook was just drowning when I caught him by the collar of his coat. I had, of course, been obliged to go into the water, and leave the ford that he had been carried from, and as I was wet through I wished also to save the mule, as his burden was of great value to us. I managed to get hold of the bridle and to bring him near enough to

the bank for the men to drag him out; he was insensible and it was a long time before he regained his feet. It was not a frost that day; indeed the sun was tolerably warm, so that the bath was infinitely less disagreeable than that I had taken a few days before in the same waters.

A short distance from the river was a large village, and its inhabitants fled at our approach. I hastened after them with Saint-Victor who had learnt Spanish with surprising quickness, and already made himself very well understood; he explained that we would do them no harm if they would return home, whereas if they would not come back, their houses would probably be pillaged. At last we convinced them; our soldiers would have been glad enough to do without their hosts, but nevertheless the promise we had made to the inhabitants was scrupulously kept. We had a good night's rest there. The village was large, no troops had passed before, and it was abundantly supplied with all requisites for man and horse.

The Dutch Hussars, that now formed part of our brigade, were under the command of an old

colonel of seventy, named Van House, who had previously been in the service of Austria and Russia; he had fought against the Turks and the Poles. I may here mention a fact that may perhaps seem a bit of vanity. I must relate that the behaviour of Saint-Victor and myself, at the first passage of the Esla, had excited a kind of admiration in him that was very flattering to me, for the old veteran had a long experience in fighting, and he had spent the greatest part of his life in countries where bridges and other means for crossing rivers are not common. It is quite true that the Esla is large and rapid, and that without any knowledge of it at all, we had plunged into it on a dark night and at a venture, which certainly was a considerable risk. We had become much attached to the old man, from the warm affection he showed to us, and General d'Avenay valued him highly, thinking him wise and capable. He now ordered him to precede us to Toro, in order to take the necessary steps for billeting the troops in concert with the local authorities.

The colonel started two hours before the time

fixed for the general departure; Saint-Victor went with him to see after our especial lodging. Their escort was composed of twenty-five hussars; an adjutant, major, and surgeon-major also made part of the detachment, the latter at his own request. We allowed the appointed time to elapse and then in our turn took to the road.

Before reaching Toro, we had a long hill to mount. On reaching the summit of this hill the town is in sight and the valley in which it is situated, extending as far as the eye can reach on the left bank of the Douro, and forming the province of Salamanca. The right bank on which we found ourselves, and on which Toro is built, is almost vertical and nearly two hundred feet higher than the opposite bank. When we came to the crest of the eminence I have described, we were surprised to see before us on the horizon a little troop of cavalry halted and guarded by vedettes. I went off at a gallop to see what it was; a horseman came to meet me, and I recognised Saint-Victor. The General followed me closely, and came up to hear what he told us.

They had found a rather numerous armed crowd in front of the gates of Toro; some uniforms could be seen among peasants' and townspeople's dresses. These men approached cautiously, stopping at a little distance; but some of them, who seemed to exercise authority over the others, having advanced and asserted that their intentions were pacific, Colonel Van House, after making known the object of his appearance, and his intention to come to an understanding with the local authorities, thought he could make his entrance into the town, and went on with confidence. No sooner had he got near the gate than a discharge of fire-arms from the entrance and the houses near it stretched him and his surgeon-major on the ground, and wounded several hussars and horses.

Saint-Victor, not being able to punish this felonious act as it deserved, retired to the height where we saw him, and towards which the Spaniards advanced slowly. The General halted his troops to conceal them; and then gave the orders to go down to meet the enemy with the hussars that had been in sight and to engage in a fire



of skirmishers, then to retire so as to draw him away from the town, as he would take refuge in it at once if he got wind of the force before him. The Spaniards were about a thousand in number; they marched in a sort of order that was not fit for defence, as their column was the same in depth as it was in width. The twenty hussars I had with me *roared*, that is the word; they had seen the fall of their colonel, whom they quite worshipped, and who had been the victim of a special act of treachery. When they saw that the moment for revenge was come, there was no possibility of restraining them; and against all the efforts of the officer in command and of myself, they threw themselves upon the Spaniards, and sent them flying on all sides, probably more scared by the sight of the column that the General brought up at full speed, on seeing what passed, than by our presence and blows. We reached the town gates before the first fugitives; and they, scattered about the fields, were hunted to death and massacred without pity. I saved some, and a good many saved themselves; but the lesson was severe, and the recollection must

have been preserved at Toro for a long period of years. In this action I saw old hussars weeping and foaming with rage, and uttering nothing but their colonel's name as an excuse for their cruelty when I interfered to snatch a few victims from them. As I pursued the fugitives, they threw away their arms at my mere command, and I reached the two most distant without anyone being with me; one was an absolute Hercules, with enormous black whiskers that could be seen from behind him, the other a lad. I spoke to the former, with considerable want of confidence in the submission I should find in him; but there was no hesitation—he dropped his gun. As to the boy, when he found me close to him, and heard me call to him “*Basco las armas!*” he turned, took aim at me with most perfect composure, and pulled the trigger at the very moment when I struck his bayonet with my sword, to try and turn away the shot which would certainly have struck me had it been fired, but, happily for me, the piece missed fire. I did not kill the boy.

Toro, though not a fortified town, is surrounded, like almost all Spanish towns, by

a wall that secures it from sudden assault, but those who ought to have defended it were the very persons we had just dispersed. A large village, called Morales, that we had on our left at a little distance, had served for a refuge to a great many fugitives from Toro. The General sent me there with a section of hussars. Fearing that they might be endangered, I left them at the entrance of the village, and went in alone with two orderlies. The most perfect silence reigned in it: all the houses were closed, and not a living soul could be seen. I came to the principal part of it, and knocked at a house of tolerably good appearance: I was obliged to reiterate my knock many times till a little wicket above the door opened and allowed the head of a priest to appear, saying to me, "*Pace.*" On my answering in the affirmative, he came himself to open the door for me. I dismounted from my horse and went in, leaving my two hussars in the street. I made use of the little Spanish I knew, to prove to the priest that he ought to preach to his parishioners in the spirit of the first word he had addressed to me. The good man seemed to me convinced he had

nothing better to do; and, raising his hands and eyes to heaven. he made me understand that if they had listened to him, not one of the inhabitants of his village would have taken part in the affray which had just provoked so severe a punishment, though he only suspected the sanguinary result.

When I issued from the presbytery, having hardly been ten minutes there. the village green, which just before had been as deserted as the streets, presented a very unexpected sight to me; it was covered with people, among whom could be seen the fugitives that had taken refuge there. It was easy to recognise them by their shoes and legs being covered with mud. Before the frost, which never lasts long in this country, the ground had been soaked by heavy rain, and the fields that our enemies had crossed in their flight had set a mark on them to betray them. I mounted my horse in the midst of this crowd; and their behaviour would, no doubt, have been most hostile had they not been restrained by fear. I left the village by the same road as I had entered, and did not find the outside section of hussars that I had left. with

orders to wait for me. Not knowing what had become of them, I proceeded towards Toro and crossed our field of battle, covered with dead and dying; amid them more than six hundred muskets had been flung away. On coming near the gate I saw no vestige of our column, but as it could not possibly have gone in any other direction than the town, I entered and followed a narrow and deserted street with houses close shut. I had a moment of uneasiness but was relieved on coming to the principal square, where I found our dragoons and hussars drawn up. I there learnt that Colonel Van House was not dead, and that none of the three wounds in his head were considered mortal, but he had not yet recovered his senses. The Spaniards had carried him into a comfortable house. As for the poor surgeon, he died on the spot.

General d'Avenay, at the moment I returned, was in conversation with a priest who spoke French very well, and was deputed by the authorities to appease the anger of the victors, and protest that they were strangers to the odious action that had aroused our vengeance. This priest was an Irishman; he seemed to be

an excellent fellow, and told us he believed what the authorities said. We made a show of doing the same, and promised the inhabitants oblivion and safety in a proclamation issued the same evening, and composed by Saint-Victor. Everything connected with the food and lodging of the troops was arranged, and matters resumed their usual order. Though the corregidor and alcalde had been sent for and had promised submission and obedience, yet we took all the military precautions that prudence dictated before we went to rest. Repose was not to be my lot, for Saint-Victor, whose turn it was to go a journey, had been compelled to take to his bed for the severe illness he was suffering from; and so the General told me that the next day I must carry the report of the occupation of Toro to the general head-quarters at Valladolid.

Two days before we arrived at this town, a battery of artillery of the Guard had been carried off two leagues away on the territory of a commune called Penilla. We found the six guns at Toro with their caissons; the gunners that managed to escape had taken away

their horses: the information we could obtain, showed that the whole country round us was insurgent and in arms. So my mission to proceed to Valladolid, twenty leagues from Toro, was most perilous; not merely in respect of the danger of death, but chiefly on account of the tortures that the Spaniards, with their natural ferocity exalted by religious and political passion, used to inflict on the French who fell into their hands. We had fresh proofs of it every day, and the notion of being sawn asunder between two planks, and crucified after mutilation, was not pleasant. It was the peasants, especially, who committed these atrocities when a solitary Frenchman found himself in their hands; they then stirred up one another, and tried who could display the greatest invention—the women especially signalised themselves by their ingenuity.

“So the next day I left Toro on a dark night, with a guide whose wife and five children were taken as hostages, with the information that if he did not lead me faithfully they should all be shot, while if I did get back he was to receive fifty piastres. These precau-

tions had a somewhat gloomy aspect, and I confess I could not see them taken without emotion. Saint-Victor was in despair; and the General embraced me and recommended the greatest care. The Irish priest told me he knew my guide, and that he might be trusted. Lastly, I put my confidence in God, and mounted Palaker, my Ukraine horse, to carry me to Tordesillas, twelve leagues from Toro, where there was a post of dragoons in a fortified house outside the town. When the gate of Toro was closed behind me, and I found myself alone with my guide in perfect darkness, abroad in a country where every inhabitant was an infuriated and ferocious enemy, full of cunning and only thinking how to cause the death of everything appertaining to the French army, my arrival at Valladolid and my return to Toro seemed to me very problematical things; and one of the best chances that came before my mind was to get myself killed in a desperate defence, so as not to fall alive into the hands of our cannibal enemies. It is at such a time that the peace of home, and the dear remembrance of our native country comes to mind. It was by giving



myself up to these recollections, and carrying all my thoughts to Normandy that my dark misgivings were somewhat lessened.

We neared a large village that I had been informed was of bad reputation, and had seen when we left Toro though at a distance of two leagues, for a bright light was burning on the top of the church tower. My guide stopped and whispered to me to listen. We heard voices at a short distance, and soon perceived that we were near a post-house and that the inhabitants of the village were on foot. We left the road and struck to the right among the vines, where it is very difficult for horses to get along, especially at night, though no props are used in Spain. We managed to get through, and recovered the road after a time that seemed long enough to me; the village was turned, and my confidence in my guide increased by this slight incident. He told me that we should not find any more villages before we came to Tordesillas, a place of safety.

Day began to break when I reached the fortified house, the post of thirty dragoons of the twelfth regiment, commanded by a Piedmontese

officer named Scarampi. I mention this name with a purpose that will appear afterwards. The fortified houses where detachments were lodged to forward communications were generally isolated from other habitations. They were surrounded with a ditch and palisade; a traverse was placed before the door; they were loopholed from the ground floor to the higher stories, and supplied with provisions and ammunition for a fortnight at least; so they were perfectly secure from surprise. Indeed, there were cannon in some of them; besides, houses in Spain are built in such a solid manner as is seldom found in other countries. I left my horse and guide under the charge of M. Scarampi; he gave me a troop horse and an orderly dragoon, and I proceeded on my way. I passed through Tordesillas; the inhabitants were just beginning to appear in the streets; their countenances assumed a sinister aspect, and they cast looks of hatred at me. The road to Valladolid was called a high-road, but that only meant that it was marked clearly enough for persons passing along it for the first time to find it without hesitation. There is only one inhabited spot on this road between

Tordesillas and Valladolid, Simancas, a town or rather village that has a certain celebrity in Spain because the archives of the kingdom are deposited there. This spot was not occupied by our troops, and I had been warned that it might be dangerous; so I was not free from anxiety when I reached it.

A bridge on the Pisuerga, with a canal by the side also passing under it, is commanded by Simancas. I had to go the whole length of this very narrow and very long bridge; on my arrival it was obstructed by a file of loaded mules. I was obliged to stop at the entrance, and found myself confined between the edge of the road and a steep bank overhanging the river; the mules came towards us, and meant to come up to our horses with hostile intentions, as they are very apt to do, and having no whip, I was obliged to take my sword and strike them on the nose with the flat of it. Now this might have brought on a disastrous encounter, for the *arrieros* have a well-deserved reputation of being the most quarrelsome people in all Spain, and I leave to the imagination the result for me of a quarrel with a dozen of these fine fellows,

each armed by toleration with a long musket. The position would have been ridiculous and dangerous—happily, it did not arise. The mules crossed, and then I crossed in my turn, in sight of the whole population of Simancas, collected on the height to watch me.

I reached Valladolid at midday, and having secured a lodging for my dragoon and the two horses, I waited on the Prince of Neufchâtel, the major-general of the army. He was with the Emperor, and when I wished to give my despatches to the aide-de-camp on duty to take them in, he told me that according to the orders now in force, I must deliver them myself, and so wait till I was informed when it should be done. I waited alone in a handsome room, half reclining on a nice sofa covered with sky blue damask, trying to sleep to escape the hunger that began to torment me, and not being able to do so, though I had spent the night without sleep, and had ridden twenty leagues of which the last eight were much the most tiring from the bad paces of my troop horse. I was invited to dinner at the staff table, and strictly charged not to be absent a moment, as from

one minute to another I might be called to the Prince, who had been informed of my arrival. I remained there from noon to eight in the evening, and then was informed that dinner was ready. I had eaten nothing for more than twenty-four hours but a little bit of bread and a little chocolate. Under these circumstances the dinner seemed to me magnificent; all the headquarter staff were present, there were several generals and officers of all ranks, and all covered with gold.

After dinner, M. de Flahault, who was then a major and aide-de-camp to the major-general, came to conduct me to the Emperor's quarters, the Prince of Neufchâtel received me in a private room. I gave him my despatches, and the paragraph that gave information of the recapture of the six guns of the Guard, pleased him so much that he stopped to go and inform the Emperor, and as he went, said he might probably wish to see me. I was much delighted at this prospect, and prepared in my head the replies I should make to the questions that would probably be addressed to me by the Emperor. I even believe that I made a little repetition of them out loud.

to judge of the language. I waited more than an hour in impatience and anxiety. At the end of that time the Prince returned carrying a large sealed packet, and another larger, unscaled. The first was addressed to General d'Avenay; the second contained proclamations to the people of Spain. He gave them both to me, and resumed the reading of the despatch; asked me some questions about our affair, and told me that I might wait till the next day to return to Tordesillas. or if I preferred it, go the same evening. I preferred the latter. It rained very hard, the night was very dark, and so if I met with anything dangerous I had a better chance of getting out of it in the dark, because no one could make preparations for my reception, not being able to see me approaching from a distance.

I left Valladolid at midnight, I had placed the proclamation round my body as a protection against balls. I reached Tordesillas without difficulty, and there recovered my horse Palaker and my guide, and when I felt the former under me after his twenty-four hours rest, I seemed to be already out of danger. But I had now to

pass by daylight near the great village my guide had avoided with so much care two nights before. They were again in arms there, as I easily saw on observing advanced posts and sentries stationed on the side towards Toro, whence danger might come to them. This village was called Pedrosa, and had a population of three thousand souls, and the houses were crowded together as they are in all the villages in Spain. The inhabitants of Pedrosa were considered quarrelsome, and were not liked in the country. They saw me quite plainly, but did not make any demonstrations of hostility.

It was night when I reached Toro, there had been great uneasiness on my account all the time I had been away, and I was therefore received as may be supposed. My poor guide was considered an angel and received a gratuity besides his fifty piastres. The despatches I handed to General d'Avenay ordered him to strike a war contribution on the province of Toro of a million reals—one thousand pounds, to give up the village of Penilla to plunder, as the attack on the battery of the artillery of the Guard, we had recaptured, had taken place in

its territory, and then to burn it so as not to leave one stone upon another. The Emperor expressed to the General his satisfaction at the manner in which the operations had been conducted, and made him a present of three hundred and twenty pounds to be deducted from the contribution he was to levy.

We were in consternation at the order to destroy Penilla. During the forty-eight hours of my absence a great part of the country had submitted; by the General's orders the arms had been brought in a mass, and there was every indication that the punishment inflicted under the walls of Toro on its treacherous inhabitants had produced a salutary effect, and there was some apprehension that the destruction of a fine village might drive the inhabitants to despair and exasperate those who might dread a similar fate; but the order was formal and military obedience does not allow of the least objection. The General sent for the Irish priest I have spoken of, and told him to cause secret information to be sent to the inhabitants of Penilla that they might have three days to remove their valuables. They did not waste time, and when



the village was set on fire and completely burnt there was nothing in it.

A few days afterwards a deputation from the village came to thank the General for the humanity he had displayed, and expressed the deepest gratitude in good terms. The word pillage in the sense it carries in such a case, implies not only spoliation, but also violation and murder; in a word, all the excesses that men released from discipline can commit in rivalry with each other as invariably takes place.

The Emperor quitted Spain a few days later to go to Germany, and oppose the march of the Austrians who had marched upon Bavaria, our ally, without previous declaration. He left Marshal Bessières at Valladolid, giving him chief command of the North West of Spain, that is to say, the Asturias, Galicia, Old Castile, the kingdom of Leon and Salamanca. General d'Avenay received orders to send a report on the condition of the country he held, as well as any information he could obtain about the orders of the Marquis de la Romana, who, with English assistance, had brought back the corps of fifteen

thousand men under his command into Spain. that should have joined our army in Germany as auxiliaries. After the events that had occurred. his defection was quite to be expected, the English had taken them on board near Hamburg, and landed them at Ferrol, whence he advanced towards Leon, but timidly and feeling his way.

Saint-Victor continued ill, and so I had to go again. As relays of post horses had been established, I made my journey at full speed. All went well as far as Tordesillas. There I had a postillion whose countenance displeased me much, and a horse that was not much better. On the road the first kept changing from the gallop to the trot and the second did the same, and his paces were infernal. I called to the postillion to stop this performance, but he paid no attention, and I thought I heard him laugh at the vain efforts I made to come up with him, when he slackened his pace my horrible horse absolutely refused to reduce the distance in front.

A quarter of a league from Valladolid, just in the middle of the road I was on, I saw

a large tree that extended its branches horizontally and covered it all. It was now night. Just as we came near the tree, a voice came from the foot of it, and called to the postillion, saying, "Is that you, Manuelo?" On his answering in the affirmative, he was asked with whom he was. "With a Frenchman," said he, and at the same instant went under the tree into the deepest shade. A conversation in half tones passed there without my being able to distinguish the purport of it; I only perceived that the number of speakers must be five or six at least. It was impossible to turn back, equally so to turn my horse elsewhere. I stopped at twenty paces from my guide, and tried to take the side furthest from the centre of the tree but could not.

It seemed clear that there were persons lying in wait for some prey, and that the postillion was an accomplice. I also calculated that I should not fall till I was under the tree, and that I should probably be stabbed to avoid giving the alarm by a shot that might be heard at the advanced posts of Valladolid. I gently drew my sabre and let it hang by the sword knot. I took

a pistol in my right hand and another in the bridle hand. and prepared to defend myself as best I could, quite expecting that the time was come. I should have a quantity to write were I obliged to relate all the flying thoughts that passed through my head at the moment. At last Manuëlo set off at a gallop, and I did the same, with the feelings a man might have in jumping over a precipice. I passed a group of Spaniards without counting them, and they said not a word; I could not see if they had any weapons, and in ten minutes I was in Valladolid in a French garrison, and in the same room where I had experienced hunger and impatience.

On dismounting, I paid the postillion the price of the stage, but when he asked me for something for himself in a somewhat peremptory tone, I refused, saying that I never gave the postillion anything unless he had behaved well. I had on my mind the repeated halts against my orders, and more than this, his conversation with the men posted under the great tree. He went away grumbling.

Marshal Bessières kept me all the next day,

and only gave me my despatches on the morning of the day after. He gave me besides a commission for Prince Mazzaredo. King Joseph's Minister of Marine, who was to stop at Tordesillas that day on a journey from Madrid to Corunna. The Marshal ordered me to follow the Prince to the next stage if he had started, and if I did not come up with him within that distance, to return to Toro.

When I reached the gate of Tordesillas I learnt that he had been gone some hours, and they thought he would stop at the first stage, but that the postillion that had gone with him had just come back, and would give me better information. My arrival had collected an assemblage at the post-house that did not seem at all well disposed. I was in a large room on the ground-floor, which served as a vestibule to the rooms of the house and the stable door. My saddle had just been laid on a bench, and I was expecting the horse to carry it and the postillion to go with me. At this moment the man who had gone with Prince Mazzaredo came in. It was the Manuelo that had given me so much cause of complaint two nights before. I

put my question to him about the Prince ; but instead of answering, he came towards me and applied a horribly abusive word to me, that was received with a loud laugh of approbation from the assemblage at the door. The word was hardly spoken when a good blow with my fist on the breast drove Manuêlo away from me. Then he caught up a heavy wooden bar, the fastening of the door leading to the narrow and retired street where the post-house was, and raised it against me. I had drawn my sword at the first movement that showed me what he meant. He threw the bar at me, but I avoided it, and he rushed to the door to get help among the crowd ; but before he could bury himself in it I reached him and gave him the point in the loins. He cried out and was surrounded in a moment ; so was I, and caught from behind and nearly thrown down, I might even say entirely so, for one of my knees and my right elbow touched the ground. I fought furiously, and having disengaged my arm, still keeping hold of my sword, struck out without looking where I hit ; my first blow was at once followed by a cry and by my deliverance, for they crowded round the wounded

man, and I could get at my pistols. As soon as I displayed them, the invaders of the house were in haste to get out, and I advanced with determination into the street. The vagabonds then gave way, leaving an open space before the door; I did not know what to do nor what would become of me. There was a considerable crowd before me, and it seemed impossible to reach the dragoons' fortified house on foot, for it was more than half a mile away and the whole length of the city.

I was delivered from this anxiety by the arrival of a postillion with two horses, mounted on one and with my saddle on the other. I found myself on horseback without well knowing how, for I kept a pistol in each hand, and I do not know at all when I returned my sword to the scabbard. As I passed through the crowd at a gallop I could see plenty of symptoms of hostility, but they did not try to stop my passage, and I reached the dragoons. M. Scarampi was a most ridiculous sight, such as unluckily I cannot describe here. When he was a little recovered from the disturbance my untimely arrival had caused him, I related what had passed, and desired him to

have Manuelo apprehended, he was taken to Valladolid and condemned to be hanged. I got his pardon from Marshal Bessières by accusing myself of having acted too hastily, and perhaps justly so. Manuelo's father had hastened to Toro on hearing of his son's destined fate; the old man had a venerable face and his sorrow affected me greatly.

When I left the dragoons, I told the postillion to lead me on the track of Prince Mazzaredo, as far as the first stage on the road to Corunna. I had imbibed confidence in this postillion from the air of delight and triumph with which he looked at me when we got out of the crowd. He led me by short cuts across fields for four leagues without my seeing a house or a living soul. At last coming round a hill, I found myself at the end of a very large village, and made my way into it without seeing anyone at first; but when I reached the square I found all the inhabitants assembled there, appearing in a great state of excitement, and conversing with great animation, most likely about the visit of the Prince which was quite an event. My arrival was another, and I was immediately surrounded. For one moment



I had an idea of dashing in my spurs, but the thought that it would certainly be a mark of fear to fly in this way stopped me. I quietly dismounted at the door of the post-house; told the postillion to take off my saddle and put it on a stone bench by the side of the door. I sat by it, making no secret of being on the watch, with my hand on the holsters. I paid my bold postillion handsomely, and a great many questions were put to him, and after ascertaining that I had no chance of catching the Prince, I prepared to proceed direct to Toro. I had ordered horses, they were a long time coming, and I was not without anxiety seeing that I had become the subject of rather animated discussion, showing that they were not agreed about me. But a little incident that had taken place a few minutes earlier was reassuring. When I paid the postillion who brought me from Tordesillas, a man of somewhat higher rank, who I thought was the schoolmaster, begged to be allowed to see my purse, made of silk with steel beads, and a burnished clasp. I handed it to him with a show of perfect confidence. He opened it, turned the contents into his hand, and I saw the purse and

a dozen napoleons that had been taken out of it, passed from one to the other, and submitted to an examination that was long enough to make me think it would not all come back. This was not at all the case, and the whole sum, as well as the purse, was faithfully returned. At last the horses were brought; my saddle was put on one that looked very fresh, and I made a brilliant departure, though rather anxious for the effect I should produce as a horseman in the eyes of those whom I left with great delight.

We galloped towards Toro by roads unknown to me; I had only one village to go through, and I think there was a band of guerillas in it, for I saw two that came out to the door of a house at the sound of our horses' gallop, and instantly went in again, either to get their weapons or to hide themselves, and escape if they thought I was followed by any force. At last I got to Toro. The day Marshal Bessières had made me spend at Valladolid had given them reason to suspect that I was killed. The General and Saint-Victor clasped me in their arms. The latter wept, never having ceased to

despair and blame himself, thinking of the dangers I ran in his place. A poor sinner never expiated his fault more sincerely and sorrowfully, for it must be owned that it was his own fault that he was unable to do his duty.

A few days afterwards I took the same ride to Valladolid without any notable adventure. Marshal Bessières gave me orders to proceed to Zamora immediately after my return to Toro; but when General d'Avenay heard that I was sent on this, he would not allow this new duty to be thrown on me, and took upon himself to go and examine the citadel of Zamorra. This town had been occupied after our arrival at Toro by a brigade of cavalry, under the orders of General Mancune, and by two battalions of Lapisse's division: and we also had received a battalion from it.

I returned to Valladolid to give an account of the state of the citadel, and was the object of an ovation when I passed the post-house at Tordesillas. It was known that the pardon of Manuëlo the postillion, was due to me, he was then with his father, and I was surrounded by a number of people in a very different spirit.

The post-mistress had been wounded by me as she was trying to interpose and stop my assailants, and still carried her arm in a sling. She was a good woman, and thanked me with animation for what I had done for her postillion. On my side I expressed all my regret at having quite involuntarily hurt her, she assured me that it would be nothing, that it was only a flesh wound; I had been told of this on my two previous visits in going and returning, but I had never seen the woman. This halt at Tordesillas procured me an experience I have never forgotten. The habitual expression of Spanish faces in regard to us was hatred and ferocity, and the general character of their physiognomy lends itself to this. Then, on the contrary, I met with kindness and even affection, and the contrast was too exceptional for it not to have made an impression on my memory.

I returned to General d'Avenay with orders to go and establish himself at Zamora; the provinces of Toro, Zamora and Salamanca were put under his command. He was given nearly five thousand infantry, a troop of horse artillery,

and five squadrons of dragoons were added to his cavalry. These forces were to be concentrated at Zamora, and our duty was to observe the Spanish corps of Romana, and a Portuguese corps that was formed at Miranda del Douro. Romana had twenty thousand men, and was fifteen leagues from us. We never knew the exact force of the Portuguese corps, it was at a distance of ten leagues; but we had nothing to fear on the left bank of the Douro, and the circuit that they would have been obliged to make to attack us by the right bank, increased their distance by three leagues. The army of Romana was in great part composed of troops of the line brought back by him from Germany. The Portuguese were nothing but an assemblage of people of all sorts, and among them was a regiment entirely made up of monks.

Zamora, whither we went, is one of the most beautiful cities of Spain; it is surrounded by high walls with flanking towers, all in a good state of preservation. At the western extremity is a citadel fortified in modern style, but so little separated from Zamora, commanded from so near by the cathedral and its bell tower, that it would

have been impossible to prevent approaches from that side; yet the defence was quite easy with a siege train. The General was very active in procuring supplies of all kinds for it, and in providing lodgings for all our force in case of necessity. The clock tower of the cathedral was mined, so that it could be blown up if necessity should occur; and when all was done, the General sent me, for the fifth time, to Valladolid, to inform the Marshal of the state of things, and also of all the information we had got touching the corps of Romana and the Portuguese forces. Three spies that we had sent, had been detected and hanged. They left widows and orphans who excited much compassion, and for whom the General begged assistance, and it was granted. It must be said in justice to the Spaniards, that it was very difficult to find spies among them. The frontier that we occupied offered more resources than usual of this kind from the large number of smugglers to be found there; persons of adventurous character, for whom the word *country* generally has no meaning. In my last journey from Valladolid to Toro, I had fallen at night into the midst of a band of brigands of

this kind, armed to the teeth. I was so tired that I had gone to sleep on my horse, and waked up as he stopped short. Before I had time to take stock of my position they spoke to my postillion, and he went off at a gallop, and as I followed him I heard that I was saluted with a "*Vaya usted con Dios Señor Caballero.*" These comfortable words gave me a great deal of satisfaction.

The journey from Zamora to Valladolid presented a much more unpleasant aspect, in one respect, than that I had taken from Toro; there was a distance of nine leagues more to traverse across a kind of desert, and a wood of two leagues in extent. I had to pass through Toro, and it was no longer held by the French; and all the way to Valladolid I had no assistance to expect but the post at Tordesillas, and this was especially slight, as the dragoons composing it kept quiet in their fortress, and had formal orders never to go fifty paces away from it, unless in case of imperative duty. A post that we had established between Zamora and Salamanca had been surprised, and all their throats mercilessly cut. So I may be forgiven for the gloomy ideas

that oppressed me in the midst of such dangers. I must regard my escape as a miracle : every day we heard of the disappearance, and sometimes of the cruel death, of some officer who was like me going with despatches. We were allowed very large travelling expenses as some recompense for the dangers that we encountered ; thus, for going to Valladolid from Toro and back, twenty pounds, and from Zamora, twenty-four pounds. This was but a small set-off to these gloomy thoughts and to the kind of danger that we ran, but it was a kind of encouragement to some. How many received it and never got any benefit from it !

Two little events happened at Zamora that may give a notion of the kind of life we led. The General gave a ball, and everything presentable at Zamora came there with the greatest delight ; among them was a certain Lopez, who had organised and commanded the resistance that we had overcome at Toro. All our military precautions were taken as usual ; we had cavalry pickets ready to march night and day. But, lo and behold ! just at midnight, when every one was trying to enjoy himself and make some



pleasant acquaintance, information reached us that the Spaniards were attacking the Toro gate. The General gave me orders to hasten to the infantry quarters, take three companies, and go to the gate with all speed. It seemed probable that the attack could not have taken place without being supported by persons within, for guns would have been wanted to blow open the gates of Zamora. As soon as I was outside I heard some musketry that was sustained, but it did not seem in great force, and seemed to come from a point to the right of the Toro gate. There were no street lamps at Zamora and the night being very dark, it took me more than ten minutes to get to the infantry quarters. I passed the hospital, containing about three hundred sick and wounded, and saw a very affecting sight. The sick were drawn up along the walls and leaning against them, with their firelocks in hand and packs on. Some wore nothing but their shirts, thinking there was no time to dress. Large fires had been kindled on the open ground before the hospital, and lighted up the pale faces of these poor soldiers, quite determined to defend themselves to the last ex-

tremity, for the Spaniards almost always cut the throats of the wounded when they captured a hospital.

The infantry were already under arms in their quarters. I took three companies, as desired by the General, and ran with them towards the Toro gate. But before I got there I perceived that the firing did not come from thence, but from the higher part of the town commanding the Douro; the artillery and cavalry barracks were in that direction. Having visited the Toro gate and ascertained that there was no attack there, but that the guard was very uneasy, I left one of my companies there, and with the other two proceeded in the direction of the fire. Approaching by a street that turned to the right. the sound of the balls striking the walls that we had on our left and in front showed me, without being quite clear, that firing was going on partly from our side and partly from another, for none of the shots struck us. We were hardly two hundred paces from the spot whence the firing came, and we heard not a shout, not a word. I ordered a call of "Who goes there?" and the answer was "France." Then I gave the order to

cease firing, and on coming up, found a sergeant in a most extraordinary state of excitement. He told me that on going towards a market about twenty paces from there, with a roof supported by a great number of posts, he had seen an assemblage of armed Spaniards with fires lighted and warming themselves. He had cried out "Who goes there?" and instead of answering, they had put out the fires and returned musket shots at him; that he had been replying for half an hour, but had really not received any other shots than those that had brought on the affair.

The matter was examined into, and it was ascertained that some twenty oxen had been provisionally lodged with their drivers in the place in question, that the unfortunate sergeant had been struck with hallucination, that no shots had been fired upon his force of fifteen men patrolling the streets, that the drivers of the oxen had been scared by the approach of this troop and the challenge that they did not understand, they had tried to extinguish their fires without reply, and that then firing had begun and killed most of the oxen.

happily without hitting the men, who had thrown themselves on the ground at the first shots.

It was a serious matter for the sergeant, and he was immediately put under arrest. Zamora was in a state of siege, and the penalty for a false alarm is death. His crime was ascribed to temporary madness, and his life was saved : but he was condemned to a long imprisonment. I have related this unimportant incident to give a slight notion of the anxious and disturbed life we led during these Spanish campaigns ; there would be no resemblance between their history and that of others of the same kind, if it were possible to collect all the circumstances of them. By the side of heroic and sublime actions will be found others that are most atrocious and sometimes most grotesque.

A few days after the adventure I have just related, a guard of four men and a corporal, that we kept a few hundred paces in front of the Toro gate, were surprised during the night, and their throats cut without the least noise to give the alarm. This guard could only have been surprised by some neglect of duty, for it was placed in a

little isolated building, very substantial, which should have been kept shut at night, according to the standing orders. Now the door had been found open without any mark of breakage, and the men were probably killed by poniards without making any defence. We supposed that they had made acquaintances among the Spaniards, as was often the case, and fallen victims to treachery.

A corporal of the garrison was also found hung by the feet in the shop of a butcher of Zamora with whom he had made acquaintance. The butcher, assisted no doubt by some accomplice, had opened the corporal as one opens a pig, and removed the whole of his inside; then after the horrible exploit, he made his escape, and on breaking into his house it was found to be stripped.

I made a sixth journey to Valladolid, to give an account of the movements of the corps of Romana, and a reconnaissance General d'Avenay had sent towards the frontier of Portugal. I remained at Valladolid a whole day, and made acquaintance with a young officer, Belgian by birth, De Sèvres by name, attached to the staff

of Marshal Bessières. A peculiar circumstance of which I was a witness induced him to make a confidant of me, in a way that put us in a few hours on the footing of old friends.

I returned to Zamora without accident, but I cannot conceive how I managed so many times to escape the dangers that lay so thickly around the paths I traversed. At that time the condition of things was such in Spain, that there were orders against any man connected with the army, either officer or soldier, going further than a gun shot from the fortified posts or camps that we occupied ; before the doors of these posts were opened in the morning a reconnoissance was sent out to explore the neighbourhood, and they seldom returned without having exchanged shots : every inhabitant was an exasperated enemy and a fanatic against us. Well, there were twenty-five leagues of country to be crossed alone among a population so hostile, that the murder of a Frenchman was considered a meritorious action in the eyes of God and the country, and all the discourses of the priests from the pulpit tended the same way. And so every time in the dark night that I preferred for starting on

my journey, when I took my way towards the gates that protected us, when I saw them open and then close behind me, so that I was left to myself, I felt my heart sink. But this disposition of my heart did not last. There was distraction in the sustained attention kept up by the instinct of self-preservation. The ear on the watch, the eyes searching into darkness, I tried to account for the least noise, or the smallest object; at the same time the remembrance of family affection came to my assistance, and caused a distraction from the presence of danger. I knew the horses at the different post-houses where I changed, and they gave me those I liked best; I had to spare them for each of them had a long stage to do. This sixth journey of fifty-six leagues coming and going was my last.

‘ A few days afterwards, at the end of March, 1809, an event happened which caused some trouble among us. The General’s brother, M. Adrien de Villaunay, arrived at Zamora quite unexpectedly. He was the husband of a charming wife; had two children, and lived in a mansion six leagues from Caen, in the enjoyment of a

sufficient fortune. Unhappily for him, he had been appointed Mayor of his commune, and in this capacity he had, with imprudent kindness, contrary to law, signed a document relating to the conscription, that rendered him liable to a prosecution instituted against him by the public prosecutor, and a conviction might entail the penalty of penal servitude. In order to avoid this, he had come away from France to get support from his brother. Adrien de Villaunay was a good sort of man, but a great boaster; very full of notions of his own consequence which were really founded upon next to nothing. We had been intimate from childhood. As to the two brothers, they were by any means on such terms; and the General received him coldly enough, though quite inclined to do him any service in his power.

Villaunay had been about three weeks with us, when General d'Avenay received orders to go to Italy to take the command of a brigade of cavalry, being a part of a division under the command of General Sahuc. While we were preparing for our departure, we were joined by Eugène d'Hautefeuille returning invalided to



France, and a young Westphalian officer going with him for the same reason. They waited for us, and went with us a few days afterwards. Our troop was composed of the General, his brother, the two officers just named, Saint-Victor and myself; with four hussars of the 2nd regiment, attached to our staff for several months, a farrier of the 12th regiment of Dragoons, and ten servants with led horses. An escort of twenty-five dragoons went with us as far as Tordesillas, where we arrived on the second day, and on the third we entered Valladolid. Marshal Bessières having been summoned to Germany to take command of the Imperial Guard, was replaced by General Kellermann.

I may say, without the least partiality, that in the important command entrusted to him, General d'Avenay had displayed great capacity, remarkable activity, and, in a word, every quality that marked him to all eyes as fit to perform the highest military services. His foresight extended to the smallest details, and he could not be found at fault in anything. He was placed at Zamora in a dangerous position, in

front of forces of the enemy of ten times his strength; but he managed for four months to impose upon them in such a way as to preserve the country entrusted to him intact, and to prevent any serious attempt being made against him. The taxes were regularly paid to the Spanish financial officials, and they kept the account; the pay of our little corps d'armée was defrayed with exactitude; and the soldier so cared for that he had never been so well off. The Spaniards who had charge of the supplies of food performed their duties to perfection, and so a whole French commissariat staff that was sent us was put aside. The members of it objected and made a great outcry, but in vain—the General was firm.

After our departure, matters did not remain on the same footing in the three provinces of Toro, Zamora and Salamanca. General d'Avenay's successor was hesitating and timid, and the Spaniards regained the confidence they had lost with us. Romana and the Portuguese advanced; bands of men were got together; the communications between Zamora and Valladolid were interrupted; and to remedy this

state of things required an expenditure of time, men and money.

General Kellermann, son of the Marshal of that name, received us very well. I had long been desirous of knowing him, being acquainted with the part he played at the battle of Marengo, the victory being almost entirely due to him at a moment of despair. He was a little man, of unhealthy and insignificant appearance, with a clever look, but false. During our short stay at Valladolid we heard some things about him that lowered him considerably in our estimation. He was a merciless peculator. Under political pretexts he would bury the most notable inhabitants of places under his control, extending over a fourth part of Spain, in the ancient dungeons of the Inquisition; he would then make a composition with their families and set the prisoners at liberty for a price that he pocketed. In later days, under the Restoration, he had a great reputation for piety. Without wishing to contest the sincerity of his religious feelings at this later period, I cannot help making the remark that, at the dedication of a church that was built at his expense near Paris, in a

commune where he was owner of a house and lands, the Abbé Fraissinous, renowned for his piety and eloquence, preached a sermon in praise of the virtues of the founder. It is very likely that both house and church were the result of exactions committed in Spain.

## CHAPTER VI.

CROSSING MOUNT CENIS—RECEPTION BY THE VICEROY—INCAPACITY AND CONFEIT OF GENERAL SAHUC—COMBAT ON THE BANKS OF THE PIAVE—GENERAL D'AVENAY MORTALLY WOUNDED—THE GRENADIERS OF THE 62ND.—GENERAL D'AVENAY'S DEATH—HIS WILL—GENERAL CAFFARELLI—GENERAL SAVARY—COLONEL D'HAUGERANVILLE—THE PARADE AT SCHÖNBRUNN—AUDIENCES OF THE EMPEROR—RETURN TO THE 6TH CHIRASSIERS—THE ABBEY OF EIGLEWORTH—THE ABBÉ AND HIS COUSIN—PARTY OF PLEASURE IN A SLEDGE—A FRENCH TRUMPETER AND A NOBLE AUSTRIAN—THE EMPEROR'S MARRIAGE—GRAND REVIEW AT PARIS—ORDER TO GO TO SPAIN.

NO event marked our return to France; the safety of the road we had to travel was secured by detachments at short distances. On reaching Bayonne we left our travelling companions, our horses, there, and we, the General and I, went off at full speed of post to Bordeaux

to fetch the carriage we had left there. One servant alone went with us. We made the sixty-six leagues between Bayonne and Bordeaux in twenty hours, and arrived worn out with fatigue. We spent three days there in getting the things we required for a fresh campaign. Nothing positive was known of the course of events ; the only subject of conversation was the rapidity with which the Emperor was marching his troops on Germany to repulse the Austrian invasion of Bavaria without previous declaration. We started for Italy by post, going northwards as far as Moulins, because of the bad state of the roads in Auvergne. We were impatient to reach new battle-fields, to revisit the Italy we had known before, and the Austrians also, old acquaintances with whom we found we had not measured ourselves quite enough. We were almost always conversing about military matters during this long journey almost alone together. We were to form a part of the advanced guard, meeting an army reorganized to great advantage and numerically superior to our own, with the traditions of war weakened by a three years' rest, and we passed in review all kinds of suppositions,

being greatly assisted by the knowledge of the ground we already possessed.

In Savoy we met a large number of civil administrators and women escaping from Italy in consequence of a serious reverse we had experienced. Our divisions had been surprised and attacked on a sudden; they had attempted to make head at Sacile between the Tagliamento and the Piave and had been completely defeated. The army had retired in disorder, and only rallied behind the Adige with a loss of ten thousand men. The General was grieved by this information. Was it a presentiment? As far as regards myself I may say in all truth that my desire to be near the enemy was greatly augmented by it.

When we reached Lanslebourg, at the foot of Mont Cenis, we spent the night there, being stopped by a hurricane that rendered the ascent of the mountain impossible. We made the attempt next day, drawn by eight horses and escorted by eight men holding four ropes attached to the corners of the carriage imperial to keep it from falling over. This was a necessary precaution, as we had in some places to pass over

fifteen feet of snow, and of unequal solidity, the soft parts being especially dangerous. We only met with one accident that might have had fatal consequences. Coming out of the tunnel that is passed on the descent towards Susa, an avalanche took us by surprise, and would infallibly have cast us into the valley to a depth of more than a thousand feet had it not been divided in two by a mass of rocks above us. A hired carriage in front of us was not so fortunate, we saw it turning over and over in the gulf for several minutes. The plane on which it rolled was by no means vertical, and the velocity of its motion was delayed by the depth of the snow so much as to make us sometimes think it would not get to the bottom; the desperate efforts of the horses also, which could be seen now buried in the snow and now violently dragged out of it by the weight of the carriage, conduced to break the speed of the fall. We remained four hours on the spot while the gunners broke a passage for us, and as soon as we were on the way we saw the four horses of the carriage standing with uninjured limbs. It seemed almost a miracle. The two men that drove them had



not fallen with them, and had no greater harm done them than being buried a few minutes in the snow, whence they were rescued by our escort.

An hour later we were in full springtime, going along a capital road at full trot, and in sight of the beautiful plain of Piedmont all covered with verdure and flowers. We slept at Turin, and next day arrived at Milan where we wished to buy horses, the circumstances being such that we had not time to wait for our own. The General found one that had belonged an aide-de-camp of the viceroy lately killed : but I could not get one at all, for the stables of all the horse-dealers had been emptied to supply the needs of the army. We proceeded in great haste to Placentia, where the General wished to leave his carriage, being the station of the depôt of the 6th Cuirassiers. We thought we should also find a horse for me there, and in reality the Major commanding the depôt of the 6th Cuirassiers lent me a troop horse. Thus equipped, we joined the army already across the Adige following a movement of the Austrian army in retreat, caused by the success of the French army in

Germany under the Emperor's command. We found the Viceroy's head-quarters at Vicenza, the Prince received General d'Avenay very well, and told him he had been impatiently expecting him. in fact he had not in his whole army a single cavalry general on whom he could depend. They were all old and had not fought since 1806. Our division, under the command of General Sabuc was composed of four superb regiments of chasseurs: the eighth and twenty-fifth formed General d'Avenay's brigade. In a month this brigade had lost two Generals, the first killed, the second severely wounded and taken prisoner. This circumstance seemed to me to presage well; it seemed impossible that fatality should brood so much over this fraction of the army as to make it always its turn to furnish Generals for the enemy's shot. It was not long before I was cruelly undeceived.

We made several reconnaissances on the right bank of the Piave, not yet entirely abandoned by the Austrians. In one of these the incapacity of General Sabuc was displayed before our eyes in such a way as to show us that the command of an advanced guard could not be in worse.

hands. He had entangled his whole division in a narrow road with deep and wide ditches on each side, insurmountable to horsemen. At various places bridges had been thrown across these ditches to communicate with the contiguous fields. Advantage had been taken of these bridges to throw out skirmishers to right and left, but the ground they had to traverse was planted with mulberry trees tied together by festoons of vines, as is usual in this country: besides, each separate property, and they are very numerous, was parted from its neighbour by a large trench running into the main ditch, and making other obstacles that our skirmishers had to leap without being able to see more than fifteen paces before them, because the mulberries were very near together, and the festoons of vines, so that the chasseurs were obliged to cut them in order to make their way, and so they had to keep their swords drawn in their hands, instead of the carabines that they ought to have had.

As soon as this march began, General d'Avenay had insisted on being allowed to proceed to the front with one regiment alone, and to send it

forward in divisions so that the three others might not be entangled before the ground had been sufficiently explored; but General Sahuc refused, and the column with the whole staff at the head was only preceded by a section of twenty-five chasseurs.

In this position our skirmishers exchanged fire with an enemy that might be said to be invisible, for there was nothing to be seen but the 'horses' feet. In this bad position there was only one thing to be done, quite against the rule that forbids troops on a reconnaissance to engage in any serious encounter, but rendered necessary under the circumstances, it was to push whatever was before us vigorously back to the mouth of the defile. Instead of that General Sahuc halted the column, and gave orders to bring up the artillery from the rear of the column, where it was hindered from coming up to us by the two thousand horses before it, in a road where two carriages could hardly go abreast. General d'Avenay showed such good reason against this ill-timed order that General Sahuc deferred its execution. I was sent to the skirmishers to endeavour to obtain some information, and the officer in

command very soon found out that the enemy he thought he had met was only our own 9th Regiment of Chasseurs attached to an infantry division, and they being on a reconnaissances on their own side had taken us for Austrians as we had them. Happily this meeting resulted in nothing but a few slight wounds to the horses instead of the men. The 9th Chasseurs went in another direction and we continued our exploration, ascertaining that on the portion of the right bank of the Piave that we had been desired to reconnoitre there was not an Austrian left, and this made us suppose that the whole of the enemy's forces had crossed to the other side ; and this supposition soon became a certainty.

We established ourselves that night in some villages that had been pointed out to us, and two Hungarian deserters came in, and were sent to the head-quarter staff. Next day, towards evening, we received orders immediately to make a demonstration on the left bank, crossing the river by a ford that was pointed out to us. The water is swelled by the melting of the snow, and is always higher in the evening than morning in rivers that descend from the Alps without a long course ;

and so we had a good deal of trouble in accomplishing our crossing, but it was got through without accident. At this spot the left bank presented a bare space, from two to two hundred feet wide, and of indefinite length towards our right, while on our left it united with the plain that extends from the banks of the Piave towards Conegliano; we were about two miles distant from this plain. Parallel with the course of the river and at the distance I have mentioned above, the ground was planted with mulberries and vines, intersected by ditches and drains, and so unsuitable for the action of cavalry. The skirmishers we sent in that direction were received by the fire of infantry and obliged to retire. This, however, was not the case with a section of the 8th Chasseurs that had been sent against two squadrons of the enemy that appeared on our left. These two squadrons halted for a short time, and then began to retire slowly, showing front every three or four hundred paces, and always followed up by our twenty-five chasseurs. I was expecting every moment to see their complete overthrow, for they were half a league away from us, on the heels of an enemy ten

times as numerous, that could easily see there were no supports. Night fell and the skirmish continued. I had twice carried orders to Colonel Curtot to call in his men, had the recall sounded, but it was not heard. An orderly had to be sent after them, and at last to my great astonishment the twenty-five chasseurs returned unpursued, without the loss of a man. with a few wounds and nothing more.

We recrossed the Piave without the least hindrance, a great surprise to us; for if the Austrians had only brought two or three field-guns to the mouth of a road that opened on the edge of ground that I have tried to describe, they might have commanded the ford by which we were retiring, and would certainly have caused us considerable loss. Thus there was no readiness on the part of the Austrian military authorities, and this is a general fault that has been found with them. We returned at evening to the cantonments we had started from, and rested the next day, but we received orders to hold ourselves in readiness to cross the 'Piave next morning, as the whole army was to make a movement to the front. This was a signal for

a battle, for the Austrians had evidently not had time to pass their luggage beyond the defile that begins at Conegliano and extends almost without interruption to Tagliamento.

The 9th of May, 1809, a day of mournful memory to me, we mounted our horses before daybreak, and marched to the ford we had reconnoitered two days before. We had orders to cross the river at that spot, and try to force the defile opposite, not having been able to penetrate into it before, and then to incline to our left, and disturb the Austrian rear-guard, making head against the mass of our arms about two miles off. This army had come by the high-road from Treviso to Udine, and was coming down upon the Piave where the bridge was destroyed, and just as we crossed the river they threw five battalions of voltigeurs, a troop of horse artillery, and the 9th Chasseurs across to the left bank.

We were stopped by Austrian infantry occupying the defile, and while skirmishing with them were joined by a division of dragoons numbering at least four thousand horse. General d'Avenay sent me to ask its commander,



General de Pully, to dismount two or three of his squadrons, to try to dislodge the infantry that stopped us—a duty these dragoons might possibly have succeeded in performing, as they were armed with fusees, and drilled to fight on foot. I have described this General in my account of the campaign of 1805, and he refused most positively, saying his orders were to support the chasseurs, and not open the way for them. The cannonade was hotly engaged on our left, and General d'Avenay in great doubt as to what to do, when an officer of the general staff, evidently alarmed, came to give us orders to move as quickly as possible to the assistance of the five battalions of voltigeurs, as they were threatened by superior forces. We went off at a trot in column of sections, ascending the course of the Piave. It did not take us long to go the distance, and we saw a cloud of dust thrown up by a mass of fugitives running towards the river. This sight made an impression on General d'Avenay, and he said to me :

“This is beginning badly, we shall very likely be thrown into the water.”

General Sahuc did not seem quite at his ease,

and as for the colonels of the two regiments, such complete demoralisation could not have been credited without seeing it. The colonel of the 8th Chasseurs was still trying to put a good face on it, but the other was past giving himself any such trouble, he had become a brute machine, unable to see or hear. The two regiments under their orders did not present the same appearance, officers and soldiers looked calm and intrepid; they were old soldiers of several campaigns, and four years rest in Italy, while fighting was going on in Prussia and Spain, made them feel a desire to measure themselves again with the enemy, and take their revenge for the battle of Sacile.\*

On reaching the spot where the action was at its height, we were received with a sharp cannonade that caused us sensible loss, while our division was forming line to the right at full trot. This movement was executed by the orders of General d'Avenay, for General Sahuc had gone off at a gallop with all his staff to place himself out of the line of fire of the two batteries, one in front of us and the other a little to our

\* Alison's "History of Europe," vol. vii. p. 308. The Austrians were defeated.

left, that were firing uninterruptedly on us and the united battalion of voltigeurs, now formed in square, having just repulsed a charge of cavalry. General d'Avenay saw at once that the two batteries of artillery were so little supported, as to give us a chance of taking them before the arrival of reinforcements that were being brought back with all speed by the Archduke commanding the Austrian army, and could now be seen opening out upon the plain.

He hastened to General Sahuc, and asked his permission to charge the batteries at once, as in any case it could not occasion heavier loss than we experienced while doing nothing. General Sahuc refused on the pretext, first that his order only desired him to support the five battalions of voltigeurs, secondly because he was of opinion that there was an obstacle between us and those batteries that would stop his cavalry and expose it to a fire of grape at short range. General d'Avenay in vain told him that he knew the ground from having been over it in 1806, that I knew it as well as he did, and that we were certain no such obstacle existed ; he would not give up. General d'Avenay irritated by this obstinacy, and greatly

shocked at the ravages that the balls were making in his ranks, was determined to make sure again that there was no obstacle to approaching the batteries in question; and so we rode towards them followed only by two orderlies. We had a near view of the square of voltigeurs surrounded with dead, and with their wounded in the centre; and what wounded! General Desaix, commanding, came out to come and speak to us, and was very nearly carried off by a shot that passed an inch from his shoulder. They literally hailed upon the spot where we were; some could be seen to ricochet, the wind of others could be felt, and there was a continuous hissing that caused very grave reflections. At last we ascertained that there was no obstacle on the ground to stop a charge of cavalry, and were just fancying ourselves masters of the batteries that had caused us such cruel loss from the commencement of their fire. There was one which was destined to strike me much more directly!

Just as we were turning to go back to our men, a sound that still rings in my ear, together with the whistle of a shot, informed me that either the General or his horse was hit; a hasty movement

of the latter gave me hopes for a moment, that he was the only sufferer. To my anxious question the General replied as he let himself fall forward on his horse's neck "My thigh is carried away." I still hoped it was not the case. Seeing him totter, I took him by the arm and tried to keep him in the saddle; but our horses were at a gallop, he could not guide his own, and in a few moments I could not prevent his falling to the ground. I was on the ground the same moment, and the two orderlies who had followed us to the extreme point of our reconnaissance, with a sergeant of voltigeurs came up at my signs and shouts. We made the General sit upon the sergeant's fusée. I supported him behind in my arms, the chasseurs raised him up upon the two ends of the fusée, the sergeant supported his leg, which only remained attached by the flesh on each side. The ball had shattered the knee, striking it from below, and had made a diagonal furrow on the horse's neck. We walked for a considerable time, but very slowly, and always under fire; the balls struck the stony ground through which the Piave runs in this place, and the pebbles flew around us. The

horse of one of the chasseurs who was carrying an end of the fusee that supported the General was hit by a shot. The fall of the horse very nearly caused that of the man, as his arm was through the reins. This accident stopped us, and the General desired to be placed on the other orderly's horse. I had let my own go, and he had run away without my troubling myself about him, as may be well supposed. With great difficulty we put the General on the horse; I walked by his side holding up the poor wounded leg, while he begged me to cut it quite off with my knife.

We were making our way directly for the Piave, but the General desired me to lead him up to General Sahuc, who was standing with his staff out of the full direction of the shot, though this did not prevent a captain of the staff being killed on that very spot. General Sahuc seemed very much affected on receiving our mournful visit. He raised his hands and eyes to Heaven, and wanted to say some words of comfort to General d'Avenay, but could not speak; while the latter, with a voice as firm as if nothing had happened, gave an account of his observa-

tions, and advised him not to delay the capture of the guns, assuring him that a single regiment if supported could effect it. After this, we resumed our way to the river to try and get across it—a very difficult matter. On reaching the bank, I met a cantineer who lent me a blanket; we laid the General on it, as he was losing a great quantity of blood which I could not stop by making ligatures of our handkerchiefs. I was all covered with this blood flowing over me as I walked, supporting the leg.

There was neither bridge nor boat to carry the army across, and the passage was accomplished by means of ropes stretched from one bank of the river to the other. The soldiers stripped naked, put their clothes on their necks and heads, as well as their muskets and pouches, and they entered the water holding on to these ropes which were placed parallel to each other, a few yards apart; and in places where the water was deep the rapid stream caused the lower part of the body to float down stream, and kept the heads of those at the greatest distance from the bank above water, when otherwise their weight would have bent the cord. However, not-

withstanding all the precautions that were taken, men were swept away and several drowned, in spite of the efforts of a hundred good swimmers posted on the two banks to save them.

I was in difficulties how to get the General across this river a hundred yards wide, when I discovered a little boat at some distance; it was brought up to the spot where I had laid the General, and I found him sound asleep. I thought him unconscious, as was quite likely from the quantity of blood he had lost and continued to lose. He awoke during the crossing, and it caused him considerable suffering; the smallest wrong movement made the dreadful leg swing aside. At last we reached the other side, where an ambulance was established in an abandoned inn. An amputation was immediately performed, lasting five minutes, and I supported the General in my arms all the time. Several artillerymen, employed as hospital orderlies, were faint at the sight of the operation. I did not give way a moment, though I experienced acute pain at the dreadful sight, and especially from my attachment to the sufferer. Only a few



tears fell from my eyes, and the General seeing them, said, "Come, my friend, take heart." These words spoken with a tone of most tender affection provoked an outburst of grief which I could not resist.

When all was over, the surgeon told me that the transport for the wounded had not come; that there was nothing for the use of the ambulance but mattresses and stretchers. The Viceroy of Italy, Eugène de Beauharnais, was a short distance away on the embankment, surrounded by his staff, watching the progress of the action and directing the passage. General Macdonald, not yet a marshal, was in the water on horseback and with his sword drawn. I do not know very well why. The men of all the regiments, officers and soldiers all entirely naked and crowded together, awaited their turn to cross. I addressed myself directly to the Viceroy, and he gave orders to place twenty-five grenadiers at my disposal, to carry the General to Treviso. They were furnished by the 62nd regiment; and I have still in my mind the displeased and sulky looks of the grenadiers at having to dress and lay down their muskets and

packs: they followed me in silence. On reaching the ambulance, four of them placed the stretcher with the General on it upon their shoulders, and the melancholy train began its march. The General's servant had found his way to us; the orderlies had managed to catch our horses, and even my sword which I had thrown down in my haste to support the General, was brought back to me.

We had three long leagues to go at mid-day in great heat. The grenadiers relieved one another by turns, marching quietly with the greatest carefulness when carrying their load, making no complaints of the weight, or of the heat of the sun, or of the dust that blinded them. They performed their duty conscientiously: but from their silence and the dejection of their looks, it was easy to see that they regretted the danger from which they were removed.

A league from Treviso I went in advance to secure quarters, and had a quarrel with the commandant of the place, an Italian officer, as he showed the greatest ill-will. He wished to have the General taken to the hospital. I treated him so roughly and threatened him so

much, that at last he gave me an order for quarters. I ran to the mayor's office, and they gave me a billet that I had not time to visit; I only sent word that a bed must be got ready, and then went to the hospital to request the chief doctor and surgeon to come and see the General as soon as they could, and then I went to meet him and found him just at the entrance of the town. The quarters he was taken to were very gloomy; there was no one but the door-keeper in the house, there was a fairly comfortable bed for my poor General, and he said in my ear as we were laying him in it, "We must be generous to these good grenadiers who have carried me so carefully."

Though so full of grief, I was deeply affected by the fact I am going to relate; it is so honourable to our soldiers, that I should like to give it publicity, and add it to others of the same kind that are noted in history, and have raised the French soldier to so high a rank.

I followed the grenadiers into the room outside the General's, and giving coins to the amount of sixteen pounds to the man who was pointed out

to me as the senior, told him that the General had desired me to thank them, and offer them this little mark of his gratitude to share among them. Their voices were raised unanimously in refusal, and it was not without a long contest, having persuaded them that the General would be pained and wounded by their refusal; having called them my comrades and friends and shaken their hands that I managed to overcome their resistance, and they took it, leaving me with the feeling that it was condescension on their part. Then I told them that they must be in great want of a dinner, and that I had ordered one for them at an inn opposite. They thanked me very much and went away. A few minutes afterwards I saw them altogether in conversation in the court. I went down to know what they were waiting for, and I learnt that they had considered that honour would not allow them to sit down at table while their comrades were fighting, and that consequently they could not take advantage of the meal I had offered. I could not shake their determination, and with much difficulty persuaded them to take some loaves and bottles of wine that I sent for in

haste. They started at once. It was five in the evening, and probably they had not eaten since the night before, as I was fasting myself.

I have lived too long with our soldiers not to know their faults, which are great, but they have also, to a very great extent, honourable feelings in them, simple and sublime.

The days succeeding this mournful one gave us the best hope; suppuration was established without the least inclination to fever; sleep was quiet, there was very little pain, and the dressings were changed without increasing suffering. All went well for a fortnight. Unhappily, stormy weather had a most fatal influence upon the General's nervous system, and at the end of that time a fearful storm broke; every clap of thunder caused a convulsive movement of the patient; his features were drawn up as the detonations continued every moment. That evening the doctor found there was fever, and the result of his consultation with the surgeon gave me the greatest anxiety. It was a disturbed night, and in the morning some incoherent

words made me apprehensive of delirium, and in reality it was not long before it appeared with alarming symptoms. Four days passed without a ray of improvement for our comfort. I had written to Villaunay, and he arrived two days before his brother's death on the 29th of May, 1809.

This glorious but melancholy end of a friend who had given me so many proofs of attachment, and whose interest was displayed in the smallest matters, left me some deep-seated memories that time has left unchanged. The circumstances of this mournful event often recur to my mind, and make me feel the heavy loss that was inflicted upon me, and also, I am convinced, upon the army and the country. General d'Avenay had all the qualities requisite for a great command. He seized at once upon the duties required by the position in which he might be placed, and mastered all the details with readiness and indefatigable activity. These qualities were peculiarly exhibited during our stay at Zamora. With six thousand men in a most hostile country, he had kept two actual armies in check; and for four months that we remained

there within their reach, they dared not make an attempt against this little isolated corps, that had no supports but the troops at Valladolid, at a distance of thirty leagues.

On reaching the army of Italy the position of General d'Avenay, speaking literally, seemed to be inferior; but it was quite evident that he was only brought there to make occasion for his being appointed General of Division; as, in fact, there were no general officers of cavalry of that rank with the army, but perfectly incapable men; and that the first words of the Viceroy said to him on his arrival, "Ah, General, I was impatiently expecting you;" as much as to tell him of the influence he would have in the cavalry operations that were to take place.

The days following his death were employed in paying our last duties to him, and putting his papers in order; among them we found one packet with this inscription: "To be opened after my death by M. Aymar de Gonneville, my aide-de-camp." I gave this packet to Adrien de Villaunay, considering that if the General had been able to foresee the presence of his brother at his last moments, he would have addressed it

to him. The envelope contained a will, by which the General bequeathed to me the enjoyment of a property in Westphalia which the Emperor had given him as a pension with the title of Baron that he had received after the Prussian campaign of 1807. In default of this property, and supposing that the bequest should not be carried into execution, he gave me a sum of sixteen hundred pounds from his savings, and any horse I might select from his stable, with its equipment. There were in the will several legacies to his sister, to his young cousins de Caux, and his servants, and I was appointed executor. All these directions were carried out, except that of the sixteen hundred pounds to me ; because the General's father, with the intention of contesting my right to this sum, had insisted that M. de Caux, who had charge of it, should place it in the hands of a banker to await the decision of the court. It was given in my favour ; but whilst the law-suit was going on, the banker became insolvent, and the sixteen hundred pounds were lost.

The General's brother and I placed an inscription to mark the spot where his remains



were laid, and then we went to Placentia, and I wrote to Saint-Victor to come to us there with the baggage. I sent all the General's property back to France, and I sold his horses, except the one that I was to select, and two that were left to his sister with his carriage. When all was finished we started to join the army, and went as far as Udine, where we were obliged to stop, because the line of operation not being quite established, Carinthia, Styria, and Carniola were in a state of insurrection. A corps was being formed at Udine able to open communications and to impose on the mountaineers of those countries, men of warlike nature and more intolerant of the strangers' yoke than others.

While we waited, General Caffarelli, aide-de-camp to the Emperor and War Minister of the Kingdom of Italy, arrived there invested with the powers of the Viceroy to take the command. I had known him a long time; he was intimate with General d'Avenay and had married in Normandy Mademoiselle d'Hecquevilly, niece of the Marquis de Balleroy, an intimate friend of ours. I had known Madame Caffarelli before

her marriage; and her husband, coming alone, took Saint-Victor and me to act as aides-de-camp to him. This service lasted six weeks; the duties we performed were most interesting, as they initiated us into the general affairs of the Kingdom of Italy, and especially its military resources. General Caffarelli was very kind to us and showed confidence in us; he had valued and loved General d'Avenay, and understood our regret, especially mine. While we were at Udine, the battles of Raab, Essling and Wagram took place, and the successive reports were received by the Italians with transports of joy. As for us, while we very sincerely shared in the rejoicing, we were ashamed of the repose we enjoyed while such grand and memorable events were in progress.

At last the communications with the Grand Army were open. The column organised at Udine was put in motion, and Saint-Victor, Adrien de Villaunay and I put our servants and horses under the care of an officer of this column, and started for Vienna in a post carriage, having to cross sixty leagues of country where we should not find a Frenchman, and only a day or two

before the population had been up against us. I must say in praise of the inhabitants of these mountains, that we had not a single hostile act on their part to encounter, not even a painful word, and we reached Vienna without the slightest hindrance. There was an armistice and treaty for peace; but for all that, armaments were pushed with an activity that caused suspicion that the last words of war had not been spoken. The Emperor was at Schönbrunn. We had to go there, as there was a standing order to the effect that any officers of the staff who might be without employment by the death of the generals they had been attached to, should proceed to head-quarters for fresh appointment. Saint-Victor and I made promises that we would not part, and that we would request to return to a cavalry regiment, not wishing to serve as aides-de-camp any more, especially with a general we did not know. We had, in consequence, to take some precautionary measures. Besides, an audience, of the Emperor had to be obtained for Adrien de Villaunay, as the only person who could relieve him from the judicial condemnation that he would certainly have undergone. I knew

General Savary, the Emperor's aide-de-camp; we went to see him; he received us very well, promised to present us himself, telling us to be in readiness for the moment he might think most favourable. We spent our time in visiting the curiosities that Vienna contains, and went to Schönbrunn at the time of the parade, when the Emperor always was present. Nothing can give an idea of these parades; they really were reviews, for, besides the troops on duty, all the detachments arriving from France and Italy appeared there, and the regiments in cantonments round Schönbrunn, among them those of the Guard, and that at only two leagues from the battle-fields of Essling and Wagram.

The most fortunate chance caused me to meet with Colonel d'Haugeranville who had succeeded General d'Avenay in command of the 6th Cuirassiers. He offered me the place of captain in my old regiment, and of lieutenant for Saint-Victor, knowing that we did not wish to be parted; but a special permission from the Emperor was required on account of the standing order about aides-de-camp to deceased generals. I spoke to General Savary and he made an appointment

with us for the next day but one, the grand parade day, and promised to present us to the Emperor after it. I watched this parade from the top of the flight of steps at Schönbrunn. The Emperor at the foot of these steps, surrounded by marshals and general officers of every rank and nation; the Austrians were present in great number, with an appearance of the greatest respect for the Emperor's person, and showing their admiration for the splendid troops then present.

There was a Portuguese division that was not trusted, and not without cause, as Portugal was attacked by us while they were in our ranks. Just as this division was marching past, the Emperor without apparent purpose, as if he was a little absent in mind, took a few steps forwards right into the centre of the column, four files of the first section were broken off to avoid the Emperor, and so in succession with all, quite to the end of the division of four regiments. No doubt this was a calculated move. Was it that the Emperor wished to give a mark of confidence in the Portuguese, or an exhibition before the strangers, especially the Austrians, of the fascina-

tion that he exercised over the soldier of any nation whatsoever? I cannot tell at all, but certainly this took place designedly.

There were forty thousand men at this parade, in better form and better drilled than I had ever seen. The Emperor was radiant. The fact is that without such resources as he could dispose of, without immense activity seconded by abilities of the first rank, and by the obedience he had made habitual to all that depended upon him, it would have been impossible, within a month or two of the battles of Essling and Wagram, to produce such perfect and beautiful regiments as appeared at this review, and with the exception of the Guard, were not superior to the rest of the army.

After the march past, the Emperor went back to the palace and entered the gallery opening on the stairs. We followed the numerous and brilliant group that accompanied him; the time for the presentation had come and my heart beat quick. When once the Emperor had gone into his rooms, he would not entertain general matters, and only received those with whom he wished to converse. He was walking quickly to the

door of separation from us. I anxiously questioned General Savary with a look, and he gave me a sign with his hand to address the Emperor, not choosing or not venturing to press the favour he had promised us any further. There was no flinching. Not only was it necessary for Saint-Victor and myself to obtain permission to re-enter the line, but what was of much more consequence, for Adrian de Villaunay to beg, in consideration of his brother's death, for a promise of amnesty from the consequences of the conviction he could not escape, and if the opportunity was missed on that day, it was adjourned indefinitely. So I resolutely advanced upon the man who overawed every one so much, even the marshals and his familiar friends. He stopped and heard me with an air of great kindness, and then turning to the Prince of Neuschâtel, the Major-General of the army told him,

“You will appoint the aides-de-camp of General d'Avenay as they have requested.”

He continued his walk. I made despairing signs to Villaunay, for he did not come forward, Saint-Victor took him by the arm and brought him to me just as the Emperor was entering his

rooms, followed by three or four persons, and the door was closing. Before it was quite shut we pushed him in by the shoulders, without having time to reflect on the position he was placed in. Thus he found himself in the presence of the man who was to pronounce judgment upon him in a question as it were of life and death, for he might be convicted of felony. In a few minutes he came out with a joyful face. The Emperor had been surprised and annoyed at his presence in the room, and at first asked him in a severe tone what he wanted, but as soon as he heard the petition, and knew that Adrian de Villannay was General d'Avenay's brother, he told him,

"Return to your home: I cannot stop the course of justice; but I have the right of granting pardon, and in your case I will not forget it."

A few days later Villaunay left us and returned to Normandy, and obtained his pardon through a general amnesty granted at the time of the marriage of the Emperor to the Archduchess Marie Louise of Austria. He has been dead a long time as well as his wife and son; his



daughter married M. de Caumont, well known for his archæological labours.\*

A few weeks afterwards we received our appointment; and we spent the time we were waiting in getting our fresh outfit, but it cost three times as much as it would have in Paris. I was particularly well off in horses, having four; my Ukraine horse; the mare that was given me by the 18th Dragoons, an unbroken mare that I had taken in exchange when I was appointed aide-de-camp, and lastly the mare that was left me by General d'Avenay. She is worthy of a special description that I could dwell upon with pleasure, but I will only say that she was the best charger I ever saw, and had not a single fault.

When our commissions arrived, we joined the 6th Cuirassiers six leagues from Vienna on the road to Snain; every person in it had been changed since I was among them. The old captains and the greatest part of the officers had been killed, or invalided, in consequence of wounds. The sub-officers, I knew before, had come in for a good deal of promotion, and I

\* And an eminent architect.—*Note by Trans.*

made the acquaintance of officers from the military school, and transferred from other regiments. Saint-Victor and I were excellently received, and a month had hardly passed since I joined, when Colonel d'Haugeranville told me that the first captain he should recommend for promotion to be major was myself, and that after M. Kauffer, the lieutenant of my troop and the senior in the regiment, Saint-Victor would be the next he should recommend for captain.

The cantonments of the regiment occupied a considerable extent, I had three villages for my company. We were authorised to make requisitions for cloth, leather, and everything necessary to replace the expenditure and losses of war. Without making any abuse of this power, I had the good luck to find a good-will in my three villages, that enabled me to make all the repairs; and I took great interest in watching my artisans at work, and the advance in my men's appearance. Great pains was also taken with their drill; a great many draughts had been had been sent up from the dépôt; horses had been purchased in the province we occupied; and the Vienna dealers had furnished others coming

from the Danubian provinces and Transylvania. In a very short time we were completely mounted and equipped, and in force. We usually mustered six squadrons on parade. I always was very fond of drill, and as peace was signed, some employment was necessary.

We occupied our cantonments for two months ; then we crossed to the right bank of the Danube and made our way slowly towards Salzburg. On our way we had passed some days on the shores of the Gemunden Lake, from which the Traun flows, and had an opportunity of seeing one of the remarkable spots of the Alps where their peaks command, and even overhang, a beautiful expanse of water of enormous depth, and so clear that the bottom can be distinctly seen twenty yards deep. The trout of this lake and of the Traun are famous.

Winter time had come, Kauffer and I were quartered in the abbey of Eiglewerth near Salzburg ; this mountain convent is situated on a peninsula in a pretty little lake surrounded on three sides by lofty hills covered with pine trees. There were only the abbot and five monks in it. The abbot was a man of thirty-five, his face,

general appearance and manners were very refined. His lodgings were very good, and had only one communication with the abbey; in the lodgings there was established with him a person who was called his cousin, and seemed to be about twenty-six or twenty-eight years old. The abbot informed me that every day a table for six would be laid for me, for both breakfast and dinner. I did not hesitate to accept it, and make the other officers quartered around me partakers of the advantage, as they were generally in peasants' houses,

The lake was frozen and Kauffer and I used to amuse ourselves by taking a sledge up to the top of a bare hill close to it, and sliding down on it with a speed greater than is now obtained on the modern railroads. The sledge was very bright, and whichever of us was in front easily guided it by digging in his heels, while the one in rear held a long pole dragging behind with the effect of a rudder.

One day that the Colonel and some officers of the staff had come to ask me for a breakfast, he wanted to make trial of the exercise, and we showed him how; but unfortunately, he had a

a notion of trying it on a larger scale, that is to say, by dragging a heavy sledge to the hill-top and then all of us getting on it and coming down together. We pointed out to him that it would be very difficult to guide such a machine with a load of eight persons, and that it was very essential to maintain a proper direction, for there were some trunks of pine trees at the bottom of the slope, rising three or four feet above the snow, and it was necessary to pass between them to escape breakage against them; but he would hear nothing, himself assumed the direction of the sledge, and posted himself in front. I bestrode a pine plank that projected some feet to the rear, and armed with my pole prepared to do the best in my power to hold our conveyance in the right road, where alone it was safe. I do not know if I should have succeeded; but a short distance from the starting point the plank broke, and I rolled over in the snow behind the sledge, and was much frightened to see it take a slanting course towards one of the formidable trees. If it had struck full against the obstacle, it is most likely that all the passengers would have been killed or seriously

injured. But it was not quite so bad as that; the sledge just grazed it, but enough to break one officer's leg, and give the Colonel a contusion of the knee that made him keep his bed three months, and lamed him for life. The surgeon-major was of our party; he set the broken leg, and the two injured men were sent back to their quarters on stretchers.

There was an adventure of another kind in our regiment. A trumpeter in my troop had formed an intimate connection with the daughter of a gentleman in the neighbourhood of Vienna. A few days after our departure, I was informed that the young lady was following my trumpeter and joined him every evening in his quarters. I caused a watch to be set; she was brought to me, and after enumerating all the wretchedness her conduct might bring upon her, I urged on her to return to her father, and threatened that I would arrest her and deliver her over to the Austrian authorities if she continued to follow us. I told her besides, that the trumpeter should be severely punished if he continued to see her after the orders that would

be given him. The young lady was thirty, and was not pretty.

Some days passed without any more news about the business, and I thought it was all over, when information came to me that it was not the case, and that the young lady continued with her lover, but very secretly. So I had him put under arrest, and confined in a dungeon of the abbey, situated in one of the towers commanding the entrance to the court. The dungeon window was closed with iron bars, and was five or six feet from the ditch, now completely frozen over. The second night that he was there the bars were sawn through, and the trumpeter made his escape; most likely with the young lady's assistance, and was never heard of again. He was a splendid man, of bad character, but very brave, an excellent horseman, and a model in appearance.

I left Eiglewerth to enjoy a six months' leave. I visited my family and awaited the return of my regiment to France. as it, with the other forces that composed the grand army were evacuating the Austrian dominions in consequence of the peace, having the marriage of the

Emperor Napoleon with the Archduchess Marie Louise for one of its conditions.

As these recollections are of my military life alone, I shall make no mention of events that did not affect my career in the service, though of personal influence on me, and so shall pass over in silence one of the most important events of my life which took place in Normandy while I was on leave.\*

In the month of August, 1810, my regiment appeared at a grand review, that took place at Paris some time after the Emperor's marriage. Thirty-two squadrons of cuirassiers marched past amid the admiring shouts of a vast multitude. A grander spectacle had never been presented to the eyes of the Parisians. The troops were in splendid condition; a crowd of kings and princes had come from all parts of Europe and formed the Emperor's suite, with the addition of his marshals and all his brilliant staff. Every person present at this review preserves a remembrance of it, as the most astonishing sight that could be imagined. I

\* Monsieur de Gonneville alludes to his marriage to his cousin, Mademoiselle le Pailleur de Langle.



was there, having been summoned by the Colonel to attend on the occasion, although I was not obliged, being on leave.

I returned to Normandy after being absent a fortnight, and took my horses there, as if warned by a presentiment that I was leaving my regiment for good and all. The peace had been made under circumstances that ought to have rendered it permanent on the side of Germany. The Emperor's marriage with the Archduchess of Austria, the terror inspired by his name, an army of almost a million of men, commanded by the most expert generals in Europe, and with the utmost confidence in the military abilities of their supreme head; all this seemed a warrant of security for us after our long and bitter struggles. Besides, the Emperor had himself made the announcement to us on the occasion of his personal inspection, and had told us besides that he expected that the idleness of garrison life, and the distractions it would present to us would not affect our warlike qualities in any way. But Spain was there to call us to work; and the desperate resistance of its inhabitants continued with its most

sanguinary events. The want of unison in the operations of the marshals commanding the various corps d'armée entailed frequent losses of men, stores, and horses. Pay and subsistence were far from being everywhere secure, and thence arose relaxation of discipline, exactions, and pillage; and, in consequence, the exasperation of the people was redoubled, and they took their revenge at every opportunity with abominable ferocity. And so the accounts we received in France represented this war in Spain in the darkest colours, being exaggerated by distance from the scene of action.

A few days after my return to Normandy I learnt that the regiments of cavalry, now six squadrons strong, had been reduced to five, and in a fortnight, by a piece of the greatest injustice, I received orders immediately to join the 13th regiment of Cuirassiers, making part of the army in Spain, under the command of General Suchet. This force occupied Aragon and the Southern part of Catalonia. On the receipt of this order I went to Paris, and remonstrated with the War Minister, pointing

out to him that I was not the junior captain of my regiment, and that so, in my case the general rule had not been followed, requiring the juniors of each rank to be the sufferers by any reduction in the number of officers of their rank. My remonstrance was not attended to, and I had a rather angry scene with the Minister about it. At the time I was appointed captain in the 6th Cuirassiers. In consequence of some neglect in the office of the Prince of Neufchâtel, this minister had not chosen to recognise my seniority in that rank, as dating from the time it had been conferred upon me by the Emperor at the review at Cassel, and I had only taken seniority from the date of my last appointment, making me last but one instead of senior captain of the regiment. The last was M. de Brias, of one of the first families in Belgium. His uncle, a senator, applied for him to remain in the regiment, a favour he would never have solicited himself, as he was a man of delicacy and right feeling.

## CHAPTER VII.

ENTRY INTO SPAIN—HEROIC DEFENCE OF FORTY GENDARMES  
 —THE COMMANDANT OF TOLOSA—MINA—PAMPELUNA—  
 TUDELLA—GENERAL REILLE'S CHIEF OF STAFF AND HIS  
 MISTRESS—SARAGOSSA—THE 13TH CUIRASSIERS—MARSHAL  
 SUCHET—THE SIEGE OF TORTOSA—LERIDA—MORA—COLONEL  
 D'AIGREMONT—SCARAMPI—ULDECONA—THE TAKING OF  
 TORTOSA—DACORA AND THE DEATH OF CÉSAR—COMMAN-  
 DANT ROBICHON.

I SET out for Spain at the end of September, 1810. The grief of my family was distracting at the moment of a parting that they expected would be the last; and I must own that though I pretended to put a good face on it, I was sure enough that there was a considerable probability that these adieux would really be the last.

I took three horses that I could depend on, and my servant Goldfrid, a Silesian, who had

been given to General d'Avenay by the Count Hochberg. He had followed us in Spain, Italy and Austria; I had brought him to France to procure payment of a legacy of sixty pounds that had been left him by the General among his other servants, and he begged to go with me again into Spain. He was a strong and clever lad. I made my journey in short stages, alone, and with sorrowful thoughts. Every step that I took seemed to be adding enormously to the distance that already separated me from Normandy. It would be impossible to describe all my miserable feelings during this long journey. There was another thing, besides, that increased my regret at leaving my delightful 6th Cuirassiers—I had a very bad opinion of the regiment I had to join. I knew that it had been raised from detachments of all the other regiments of the same branch, and I knew the spirit that animated the selection of these detachments well enough to know that they must have been composed of all the worst men and horses the colonels could find. Then, being used to mix only with troops perfect in condition, drill and knowledge, the idea of finding something very different, and besides, having officers

with whom I had no sympathy for my comrades was hateful to me. No just notion of the charm of companionship can be formed by any one who has not known what it is when springing from fellowship in the dangers, fatigues and privations that are inseparable from any serious war. The character of that now raging in Spain was such as to make the mutual support that is meant by what is termed *esprit de corps* the more necessary, and my conjectures led me to suppose that this feeling was not to be found in my new regiment. I remembered the condition of the 6th Cuirassiers before Colonel d'Avenay took the command, and it seemed to me a very natural supposition that if it had been difficult to compass the fusion of the two parties that made up that corps, there would be many more obstacles to encounter in the formation of the 13th Cuirassiers, composed as it was of detachments from the fourteen regiments of heavy cavalry then in existence; however, submission was a necessity, and I went.

At Tours I found a marching battalion of the 45th regiment of foot on its way to Spain to join the regiment. The battalions that went from

the depôts to be broken up on arrival, and their men distributed to the companies in proportion to their proper strength, were called marching battalions. As I was proceeding in the same direction, and stopped at the same places, I soon made the acquaintance of the officers of this battalion; a captain was in command, a pleasant companion, and his conversation was a great pleasure to me. He had my billets prepared by his adjutant-major who preceded us, and I joined the officers at their meals; this arrangement, by temporarily breaking my solitude, caused some diversion from my mournful thoughts, and made the way seem shorter to me.

At Bordeaux I found d'Infreville, one of the companions of my youth; he had wasted his whole fortune, and was now awaiting a fair wind to embark for the East Indies, his passage being paid by his family. He died a millionaire.

Ten days after leaving Bordeaux I entered Spain, still with my infantry battalion, deriving the more benefit from their company because it was impossible to travel alone, even a mile from the frontier. I crossed the bridge of the Bidassoa which I had passed eighteen months before in

the opposite direction, with my heart full of pleasure and hope, in the midst of friends and attached to the fortunes of General d'Avenay, whose death had more clearly displayed the affection he bore me. The recollection of that time, as contrasted with the present, made me feel the loss of my dear general and the absence of any friends, with great severity, and cast a mournful shade over the future that I was going alone to meet in this Spain—the scene of a savage warfare, respecting no rights, where every step that was taken brought some fresh atrocity to light. There anything that did not wear the colours of France, or of our allies, was an enemy to be distrusted. We met nothing but looks of hatred, and the most minute precautions for safety had come to be the common rule of life at every moment. At the present time, secure from any risk, I am still under the dominion of the habits of that time, they had taken such hold in consequence of the catastrophes that resulted from their neglect, as taught by continual proofs.\*

\* M. de Gonneville when he travelled, and even when he went for a long ride preserved the habit of going armed.



We went near a barn posted on the highest point of the hills between Irun and Ernani. This barn was held by forty gendarmes as a post of communication, and it had been attacked two months before by Mina's band, three thousand men strong. It was only loopholed, and had not even what is called a traverse to protect the door. The defence was such that the Spaniards lost more than two hundred men during the two days their attack lasted, and were forced to retire before the assistance that was sent to the brave gendarmes from Irun and Ernani. The whole roof had been burnt; but the fire began at one end, and that fell in before the other end was on fire. So the defenders of the barn passed over the burning wood and ashes with their ammunition, so as not to be crushed by the fall of the rest of the roof. The enemy thinking that they must be all burnt, fancied there was nothing more to do but to go into the barn and take possession of the remains, but paid dearly for their belief. Not one of the gendarmes had been killed, and there issued from the ruins a fire that caused greater losses than had been incurred before.

Having spent a short time on the scene of this

heroic defence we resumed our journey, and next day we reached Tolosa. I there separated from the battalion that I had travelled with for several weeks. I was sorry to part with them for more reasons than one; I had received numerous indications of good will from the officers, especially from the captain in command, and besides being quite alone was a great hindrance to continuing the journey. I had to proceed by Pampeluna and Saragossa to Tortosa, then besieged by the army of General Suchet; but being unable to march alone, I had to face a multitude of difficulties, inconveniences and dangers. I went to the major commanding the town of Tolosa to ask him to give me the means of proceeding to Pampeluna. I found a man with a mean face, and completely drunk. He had a woman with him of the most suspicious aspect, though far removed from youth, and it might be seen at a glance that she was a worthy associate of her companion in point of intemperance. At seeing two such repulsive beings I felt a rising of anger that I repressed at first, but I broke out when the major, having cast a vague glance on my marching orders, looked

me over with a most insolent air, and said that as he could not foresee when he should be able to send a detachment in the direction, I was to start alone the next day. I knew that the way was unsafe for detachments of less than two hundred men, and that three hundred were always sent with the courier carrying despatches. For fifteen leagues the road skirts a buttress of the Pyrenees, covered with woods, and at that time serving for a refuge for the band of Mina, a celebrated guerilla of that period, who had five or six thousand devoted men under his orders, and intercepted the communications of our army with France by all means in his power. Every day was marked by his expeditions to one point or another. So the chances were a hundred thousand to one that if I started alone I should not reach my destination, and that I should never be heard of again; for Mina had no single stronghold that could serve him as a depôt, so he made no prisoners, and any Frenchmen who fell into his hands were pitilessly shot. But the commandant of Tolosa had some time since come to a resolution, accompanied by a tariff condemning every district where a Frenchman was killed or

disappeared, to pay him a sum proportionate to the rank of the victim, and he found that the escorts deprived him of his profits. So we had a violent dispute, in which he bore a very lame part, especially when I told him that I should immediately go and inform the General commanding at Vittoria of the order to start alone that he was giving me, and his refusal to continue my order for lodging and forage for my horses. It ended in everything being granted to me, and I waited.

Two days afterwards the courier from France arrived, the despatches for Pampeluna were forwarded; I joined the escort and we reached without difficulty Lecombery, a point between Tolosa and Pampeluna. Lecombery was guarded by a battalion shut up in a great fortified house. Strictly speaking I ought to have continued my journey to Pampeluna the same day, being a distance of seven leagues, but I had already come ten at the pace of the infantry, and wished to spare my horses. So I determined to stop there till the next day, when I should take advantage of the departure of some companies of the garrison, that were to be relieved by others coming from

Pampeluna. I was billeted at the priest's house, and this was separated from that held by the troops by a little open space of about two hundred paces wide. It was scarcely an hour after my arrival and the courier's departure, escorted by half of the garrison under the major's orders, when information was given of the presence of the enemy round the village, and they began to make their way into it by the side opposite to the fortified house. I was at this moment with the officers, having been invited to dinner by them, and had only time to run to my horses, finding them by good luck ready saddled; my servant was feeding them. I instantly untied one, telling the servant to follow me, and we hurried to our refuge and reached it so exactly in the nick of time, that if the stable had not had an entrance directly from the road, I should certainly have fallen into the hands of Mina, for the priest told me that his men entered the yard as I was leaving the house.

My horses were placed in a ground-floor room where a stall had been fitted for the major's horse, and so I found myself in safety. I ran a much more considerable risk than danger to my person

only, as I might have lost my horses, baggage, and servant, and found myself alone in Spain without any equipment but what I had on my body. The day was spent on the alert; some shots without result were fired on our side, and towards night the Spaniards retired. They were about fifteen hundred in number; but, meanwhile, Mina in person had attacked the courier and his escort in a wood two leagues from Lecombery on the road to Pampeluna. The escort suffered severe loss, and all the horses in the column were killed except the major's. It was a great chance that I was not there, and if I had been, it is most likely that my horses would have perished, being remarkable for their size and beauty. In the course of my military life, I have many times had cause to be thankful to Providence for protection granted to me, and this circumstance is an example, when I escaped two dangers on the same day; for it would have been more natural to have continued my journey with the courier, and on the other hand, by stopping at Lecombery the demonstration the enemy made on this village would have been fatal to me if the information had reached me two minutes later, and if my

billet had been anywhere but at the priest's house I must infallibly have perished.

Two days later the major and the men he brought back from Pampeluna came in, and I set out for that town with two or three companies, and we arrived there without misadventure of any kind. There I obtained the first information about the regiment I was going to join. It was such a concert of praises, and marvellous accounts of its exploits, and the terror it caused the enemy, that I felt myself grow taller as I listened to it all, and my thoughts took a different turn, except the sorrow that I felt at leaving Normandy, and the uneasiness that was felt there on my account. So I became anxious to find myself at my post, and to show that I was worthy to belong to such a corps that was said by all accounts to be so select.

I spent four days at Pampeluna, waiting for the starting of a train of ammunition that was to be despatched to Tortosa for the siege under General Suchet. The week before a similar train had been attacked a few leagues from Pampeluna, and had lost a great many men

before the enemy was driven back. It was very important to the Spaniards to hold Tortosa, as it was their arsenal, and a centre of communication between the insurgents of Catalonia and of Aragon; and this was the reason of the efforts made to impede the despatch of the means of destruction destined for that place. As an attack was expected on the train that I was to travel with, the escort was raised to fifteen hundred men and two guns. The lancers of Berg were the cavalry. We set off in beautiful weather. The lancers acted as scouts in concert with a company of Miquelets, Spaniards in our pay, and real robbers. When we reached some spot of dangerous repute, their functions as scouts became a dead letter, for they became excessively timid at the risk of falling into the hands of their countrymen, who would have handled them without mercy; but for the three days I marched with them, the lancers performed their duty as scouts with great intelligence and boldness on a country that is very suitable for ambuscades in its whole extent, although but thinly wooded.

We reached Tudela the third day, and the



ammunition was stored there ; we had not seen so much as an enemy's musket. The escort furnished by the garrison of Pampeluna stopped there. General Reille was in command at Tudela, and report said that his chief of the staff had a Spanish mistress who extracted confidential information from him on the movement of troops, the force and composition of detachments, and then sent it on to Mina. The attack on the preceding ammunition train was laid down to him, and several other misdeeds. I saw the woman one night at an evening party at the commandant's ; she was playing high, as was also her lover, a man just upon fifty and looking very ill-conditioned. As for her, she might be capable of any wickedness judging by her face and manner.

From Tudela I went towards Saragossa without escort, as the right bank of the Ebro was not very dangerous. Though we had much difficulty in understanding one another, I was not sorry for the company of four Polish soldiers going the same way, to whom I had been of some service in Pampeluna, getting their rations and billets given them ; for before I had helped

them, they had been long in getting supplied, and sometimes had not succeeded at all. On their side, the poor men displayed their thankfulness by all the little services that they could pay me, they only left me at Mora, near Tortosa where their regiment was.

I took two days in going from Tudela to Saragossa, and was much interested in visiting that city, still half in ruins. All the circumstances of the attack and defence were explained to me on the spot, and this very much modified my views as to the heroism of the defenders, as they were twice as numerous as their assailants; and as they had to fight in the streets from house to house, they should have at last been superior to their adversaries, had they been equally courageous and enduring. Notwithstanding this observation in the interests of truth, the defence of Saragossa, a town open on all sides, will none the less remain a most memorable fact in history, and it was performed at a time when the Spaniards must have been demoralised by the thought that, their efforts would be powerless against the immense forces that invaded their country by all the passes of

the Pyrenees. The fort of Saragossa capitulated on the 21st February, 1809, and its commander, Castaños, was carried a prisoner to France and shut up at Vincennes, and was only released in consequence of the events that restored the Bourbons to the throne of France in 1814.

At Saragossa I obtained positive information about the regiment I was going to join. I have already said it was raised by detachments from the twelve regiments of the same arm that were in Germany when it was formed, and two regiments of carabineers; it had acquired an excellent *esprit de corps*, and fabulous stories were told of its exploits. For instance, while General Suchet was besieging that town, it had alone, before there was time to collect the necessary force, attacked and put to flight a force of fifteen thousand Spaniards, commanded by O'Donnell, which was advancing to the assistance of that place, while the besiegers numbered at most ten thousand men. The march of O'Donnell was so secretly performed that he was only a league from Lerida before his approach was suspected. He was marching in

column by divisions in the plain of Martorell, when the 13th Cuirassiers, whose cantonments lay in that direction, flung themselves upon the head of the column, while it endeavoured to deploy at sight of them, and suspecting that they were followed by other troops. The manœuvre was attempted hastily, caused such confusion that a panic ensued and a general flight, the arms were flung away and the ground strewn with them. Six hundred prisoners, chiefly officers, were taken; all the guns were captured, and when General Suchet arrived with what troops he could bring without endangering the siege operations, all was over. The loss of the 13th Cuirassiers was very trifling, unless we except that of young d'Houdetot, a pretty sub-lieutenant under twenty, just like a girl. While amusing himself with giving scope to his *lightning sword* among the flying crowd, he had the misfortune to come across an ill-humoured soldier, who gave him a bayonet wound of which he died next day.

From Saragossa I made my way towards Mora, a large village, and the head-quarters of General Suchet, whom I had already seen in Silesia. He

received me very well, invited me to dinner and praised my regiment very much to me. General Suchet afterwards became marshal, and his name occupies a brilliant and honourable place in the history of the wars of the Revolution and the Empire; he was then a few years over forty, and only two years before had married Mademoiselle Anthoine de Saint Joseph, a very pretty girl, and daughter of one of the richest merchants in Marseilles. In the memoirs of Marshal Suchet that she gave me after his death, the account of the action at Martorell is not exactly the same as I have given; but that can be explained by the manner of its commencement, as it was really a surprise by the Spaniards, and that is what the persons who are surprised in war never allow.

There had been no information received of the enemy's march; the 13th Cuirassiers being in the first line on the side of his approach, only received information of his presence from their own vedettes just as two-thirds of the horses had gone to water. These horses were brought back at a gallop, were bridled in haste, without even waiting to put on the cloak-cases, but leaving

them on the spot ; and with only three squadrons they charged down on fifteen thousand men, regular troops and provided with sufficient artillery. and defeated them utterly. The fact was known to the whole army, and they professed such admiration for the 13th Cuirassiers that I myself could select many instances. When General Suchet inaugurated his command with the Battle of Moria, this regiment turned the fate of the day in our favour, just as the Spaniards were thinking themselves conquerors and shouting victory, while the French army was commencing a movement in retreat.

At Mora, I learnt from General Suchet's own lips that the day before a detachment of ten thousand *mén*, stationed at Uldecona as a corps of observation to cover the operations of the siege of Tortosa on the Valentia side, had been attacked by eight thousand men of the army of Valentia ; this attack had been repulsed, and the enemy had lost more than two thousand men besides all the guns he had brought. The 13th Cuirassiers were a part of the little force at Uldecona and contributed much to their success. Next day I was to join them, as Uldecona is only

seven leagues from Mora, and if I had arrived forty-eight hours sooner I might have shared in this brilliant exploit before I had got off my horse; it would have been a fine beginning.

I started the next day, passing under the guns of Tolosa, and two hours afterwards met the column of prisoners made two days before. They were on their road to France, and were well-equipped and marching in good order. At last I arrived, and was excellently received by Colonel d'Aigremont, the very man who, when he was major, had taken my part at General Espagne's dinner when I had just been released from captivity in Prussia. He introduced me the next day, and I found myself at the head of the finest troop in the regiment, with a strength of a hundred and fifty men and a hundred and twenty horses. I succeeded Captain Scarampi, brother of the man I had known at the block-house of Tordesillas. He had just been appointed major in the regiment, and was on detachment in Aragon. He was a very handsome man, rather slight for his height of six feet, but of good carriage and very martial appearance

He belonged to a noble family of Piedmont; his character was noble, generous, and chivalrous. He was a personification in the highest degree of the legendary figures of ancient champions, at the fairest period of their history. Besides, his temper was charming, and he was a devoted friend. Everyone loved and respected him. He soon returned to the regiment, and I became very intimate with him; his memory is very dear to me.

Two days after I reached Uldecona I was sent to make a reconnaissance towards Vinaros, with fifty cuirassiers and fifty hussars of the 4th Regiment. Vinaros is the place where the Duke de Vendôme died during the wars of the succession. He was buried in the church, where his tomb is still to be seen. The Spaniards had evacuated Vinaros, and the hussars pushed on to Benicarlos, four leagues further on the road to Valentia. I waited for them at Vinaros as we had reached it at four in the morning, in splendid moonlight, and on such a night as is only seen in this beautiful climate.

When I had seen to the security of my detachment, making them remain mounted till day-



light, I went through the village which is of considerable size, and I came down to the quay just as an English pinnace was putting off to go to a frigate that was to be seen at anchor a short distance out. I was within pistol-shot of the pinnace, and the crew would most likely have given me a very severe salute if I had given them time to pick up their arms: but I prudently re-entered the street and got out of their sight, and went back to my cuirassiers in their position in front of the village in an olive grove. The hussars were away for seven or eight hours, meanwhile I obtained food for my men and horses. The hussars found no one at Benicarlos, and we returned at night to Uldecona.

The enemy left us there very quiet for more than a month, up to the 2nd January, 1811, when Tortosa was taken. I went over the siege works in detail, and was much interested, getting a complete idea of the means employed in the attack and defence of fortified places. Tortosa is one of the strongest fortresses in Spain. The breaching battery had been established on the counterscarp of a bastion that

served as a counterfort towards the Ebro, and only just thick enough to carry the guns, the gun detachments and the necessary guard. It seemed to me wonderful that they ever managed to get there. The breach was practicable and the Spaniards made a good defence up to the time when they thought their efforts became useless. At the moment they were capitulating, and General Suchet had mounted the breach to receive their submission, our soldiers on guard in the batteries and trenches, cried out, "Do not surrender, brave Spaniards! your chiefs are betraying you, the breach is not practicable!" The rogues wished to take the place by storm, that they might pillage it.

A little while after the taking of Tortosa, my regiment received orders to go and hold the post of Daroca, a town in the lower part of Aragon, twenty-five leagues south of Saragossa. We left sixty horses under the command of Major Robichon, and this detachment formed part of the garrison that remained at Uldecona with the object of observing the army of Valentia. Nothing occurred during our march to Valentia, and we reached this town which

derives an equal celebrity from the part it played during the occupation of Spain by the Moors, and also by the miracles that are said in story to have taken place there. The ruins of the ancient fortifications still exist, and are of vast extent, much beyond the present proportions of the city containing in 1810 no more than five or six thousand inhabitants. We were then on the advanced posts, having a few leagues in front of us the Count of Villa Campa, more of a partisan than a General, but a person who made it very necessary to keep a sharp look out before him.

We spent two months at Daroca and were as quiet all the time as at Uldecona, although resting a little in the air, for we were alone without infantry, and the troops we had to look to for support were ten leagues in rear. But the regiment had been almost always at the advanced posts, and knew the duty of keeping capital guard, and its formidable reputation also removed any inclination of the Spaniards to trouble its repose.

At Daroca we performed the "Death of Cæsar" with some success. The theatre was large and

was perfectly crammed. All the ladies of the town were most anxious to be present at this play. During its performance the guards were doubled, and if the enemy had presented himself, the actors, myself among them, must have mounted their horses in the costume of ancient Romans.

We left Daroca to move to the front on the road to Teruel and Albaracin, places occupied by Villa Campa. We were established at Santa Olalla, a large village in the midst of a fertile plain, but perfectly bare of trees. The regiment stayed there several months, and during this time I was detached on many occasions with a squadron on various expeditions, first with the 121st Regiment of Foot, and afterwards with the 44th. I held the post of Origuella in the mountains separating the south of Aragon from Old Castile, we had some alarms there but no serious attack. Afterwards Major Scarampi came to join me with fifty cuirassiers, and took the command of the detachment.

While we were at Santa Olalla, Major Robichon was left at Uldecona and performed a brilliant piece of service. The enemy's outposts held

Vinaros, and every morning sent a reconnaissance to Uldecona. This reconnaissance consisted of a squadron, and used to stop a quarter of a league from Uldecona on the bank of the dry bed of a torrent. Major Robichon received orders to post himself in this bed of the torrent to wait for the reconnaissance, and charge the men as soon as they arrived, and pursue them with the object of making prisoners. He exactly performed this duty with fifty-seven horsemen; but having gone eagerly into the pursuit of the fugitives for a league and a half, he reached the borders of the olive wood bounding the plain on that side, and in the disorder that necessarily ensues upon a pursuit of this kind, he found himself all at once in front of three fresh squadrons coming to meet him with the squadron that had been flying and had quickly rallied behind them. The situation would have been desperate for men less used to war and less courageous than our cuirassiers; but they never gave a thought to a retreat which must have entailed disastrous consequences, and without counting their enemies, who were ten to one, they flung themselves, at their officer's call, upon the mass that was out-

flanking them on all sides, and after a conflict that lasted half an hour put it completely to flight, leaving forty killed or wounded on the ground, a hundred prisoners picked up after the action, and four hundred weapons of different kinds that were flung down by the fugitives. Major Robichon had only seventeen men disabled, and not one mortally wounded. The General-in-chief published this action to the army in a special General Order, and wrote to the Colonel to compliment him on the heroic conduct of the detachment. One specimen may here be given to show the spirit that animated the soldiers of this excellent regiment. A cuirassier of the detachment just mentioned was riding a bad horse, and fell a quarter of a league behind in the pursuit of the reconnaissance. So from this distance he beheld his comrades surrounded by the four squadrons coming out of the olive wood, and joined by the fugitive squadron, making the number of their opponents more than five hundred. Certainly this man could not have been accused of cowardice if he had gone to Uldecona to carry information of the disaster that seemed imminent, and to get support; but

he never thought of any such thing. He kept on spurring the jade he was riding, came up at last, flung himself into the fight, and did his part to secure a success that was beyond all probability. He thought he had only done his duty, and seemed much surprised at the praises given to his conduct.

Major Robichon had covered himself with glory on another occasion, several months before my joining the regiment. He was in command of a detachment of forty cuirassiers forming, with eight companies of voltigeurs, the advanced guard of the division of General Abbé, in charge of the operations on the banks of the Cinca. This advanced guard had just crossed the river by a ford, and was separated from the main body of the division in consequence of a sudden rise of the water, as often takes place in the Cinca, as is noted by Cæsar in his Commentaries as having caused him to meet with a check. The Spaniards soon saw that Abbé's advanced guard was in a critical position ; the tocsin was sounded several leagues around, and more than twenty thousand armed peasants came up to attack this advanced guard, and they, losing confidence from the

impossibility of obtaining assistance, entertained proposals for capitulation. The infantry officers were called together by their commander and agreed to surrender. Robichon alone declared that he would never give up, and was warmly applauded by his cuirassiers. So they had to swim back across the Cinca, and try to join the division, but the division had left the bank of the river opposite to go to a bridge a few leagues higher up, and its place had been taken by the peasants of that side, who had hastened up at the sound of the tocsin to take their share in the hunt. Under the fire of the peasants they started swimming their horses, landed man by man in the midst of their enemies, flung themselves one by one upon anything that presumed to oppose them, and marched after the division, joining them at night; they lost fourteen men in this glorious retreat. Major Robichon and the <sup>others</sup> ~~men~~ under his orders arrived safely ~~at~~ sound.